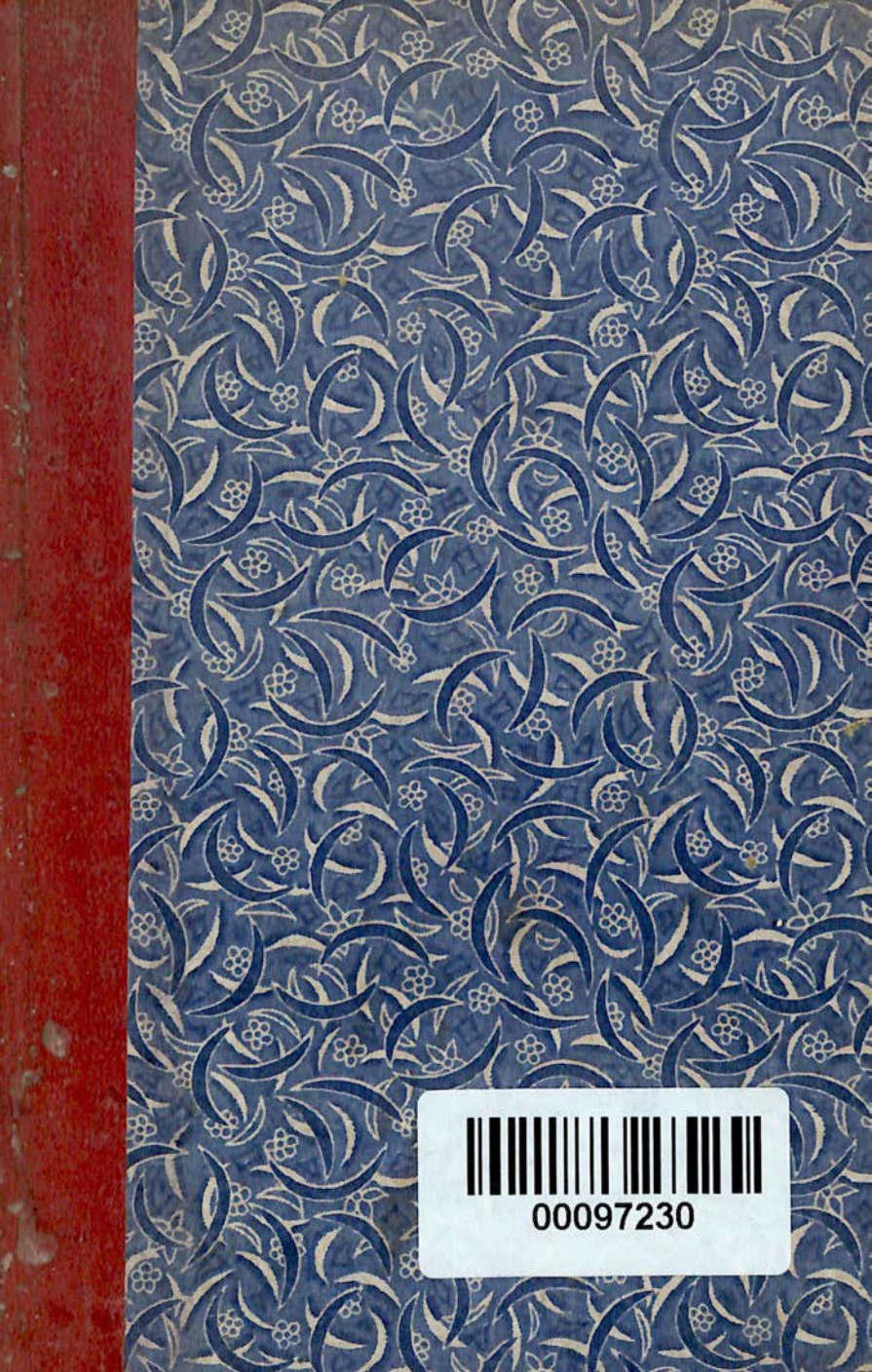
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ESSAYS

UPON

HISTORY AND POLITICS.

BY

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ESSAYS

ON

HISTORY AND POLITICS.

LORD MACAULAY, February, 1860.

"Standing too near to a man's grave, all writers who have trained themselves to habits of liberal sympathy and of generous forbearance—all, in short, but the very juvenile and thoughtless, or the very malignant—put a seal upon their lips."* We trust our readers will have no just cause for complaining that we have neglected the charitable caution which these words convey. In all that we now propose to say of Lord Macaulay we shall strive to keep in mind the wholesome fable of the dead lion. Be his real dimensions what they may, he seems very large to us; and we shall be guilty of no remark incompatible with the assumption that he is one of the giants of English literature.

* De Quincey.

Another generation, indeed, will judge him certainly as an historian, and probably as a writer, with more correctness than our own. But the necessity for immediate criticism arises from the fact that all the mischief to which certain universally-admitted characteristics of his writings may give birth is to be apprehended at once; and that by the time critics have become impartial, they may likewise have become impotent. This is the case, to some extent, in every department of literature, and is the legitimate excuse of the many hasty and unfair opinions which are expressed by literary censors. But errors of history are still less likely to be exploded than errors of literature, as history itself is more frequently taken upon trust. Probably every man who has any well-defined opinions upon poetry has read our standard poets with some critical attention. But of those who at a moment's notice, are ready with a precise definition of the most famous characters, and a prompt decision on the most critical transactions, in the history of their country, how many have read with care even one historian? Hence a more fertile source of falsehood in the nature of the subject itself, while it is at the same time less amenable to the influence of that extended literary culture which is calculated to extinguish so many other kinds of error. Nay, so far is this progressive refinement from exercising any *corrective* power upon historical fallacies, that it may be questioned if it have not even the opposite effect. That very appreciation of literary and artistic excellence which delivers us from one set of idols, may create another. The love of form may be cultivated to an unhealthy extent engendering a comparative indifference to the matter which it clothes. And

there is always danger lest the political apathy which centuries of orderly progress, and absolute and hereditary ignorance of civil strife are calculated to produce, should combine with the predominance of literary and artistic taste, such as we witness in England at the present time, to aggravate the mischief we have indicated.

Assuming that the above view is, to any extent, borne out by facts, the reasons for subjecting popular writers upon grave subjects to special and vigilant scrutiny, at once becomes apparent. Nor are these the only reasons. Even errors in science, though we should grant them to be more injurious to human happiness than historical errors, do not call upon professional critics for the same instantaneous correction. The daily and hourly comfort of mankind is so closely bound up with the truths of the physical sciences, that we may safely leave the vindication of them to the interested parties. But the peculiarity of history is this, that the erroneous interpretation of its lessons, while fraught with consequences which can hardly be considered less important to the world at large than mistaken theories of medicine or mechanics, is only made manifest by slow degrees, can be subjected to no immediate test, and arrays against itself none of those ordinary and material interests which can always be appealed to in behalf of the useful arts. History, indeed, seems to combine in this respect the disadvantageous qualities of pure literature on the one hand, and physical science on the other, without the compensating attractions of either. It has, to some extent, the intangibility of poetry or moral speculation without their beauty; it has, to some extent, the dryness of science

without its immediate usefulness. It deals with events and with human beings, which, to the majority of mankind, are unrealities, yet it may not embellish them. It demands laborious intellectual exertion, yet it yields no material or visible fruit. The prospect of impunity which is thus held out to men who, for any motive whatever, tamper with its truths, is obvious at a glance. It is, comparatively speaking, nobody's interest to detect them. If history is made amusing, who will take the trouble to investigate its truth, and who will care if it be true? A few historical students —one or two perhaps crotchety hero-worshippers—here and there a politician—but of the general public, not one.

Lord Macaulay was born in the year 1800, and took his degree at Cambridge in 1821. Within a year or two from this period we find him engaged on a leading London periodical, and within four years laying the first stone of his future reputation by his essay upon Milton. This early development of his powers must always be remembered in estimating the character of his mind. He himself says that his article on Milton contains hardly a sentence which his mature judgment approved. If so, the rapidity with which he improved on the work of five-and-twenty is only less remarkable than the vigour which he had then attained. In his speeches in the House of Commons, delivered five years afterwards, where the temptation to be florid was greater, and the power of self-control less, than in the pages of the *Edinburgh*, all traces of this fault have vanished. Indeed, we know few things more remarkable than Lord Macaulay's speeches on the Reform Bill, delivered at intervals between

November 1830 and July 1832. The first are as perfect as the last. They exhibit no shade of the diffidence which any young man might be expected to feel in addressing a deliberative assembly upon a subject so especially requiring exactly what he himself wanted—parliamentary experience and knowledge of constitutional law. His sentences are as cleanly cut; his periods as telling; his illustrations as vigorous and pertinent; and his logic as plausible as in the most effective of his subsequent writings. He lacked, we are told, the gesture and the passion of an orator; but as specimens of vigorous and imposing English, they will bear comparison with anything he has written.

In the debates which took place on the Reform Bill, Croker was Macaulay's frequent antagonist. The former, though he spoke well, could not pretend to the same degree of that peculiar power which Macaulay had—the power, namely, of turning an opponent's arguments against himself with thorough effect. But on one occasion his reply was happy. On the 20th September, 1831, Lord Macaulay made his, perhaps, most celebrated parliamentary effort, consisting of an impassioned appeal to the aristocracy, to take warning by the fate of the French nobility:

> And why were those haughty nobles destroyed with that utter destruction? Why were they scattered over the face of the earth, their titles abolished, their escutcheons defaced, their parks wasted, their palaces dismantled, their heritage given to strangers? Because they had no sympathy with the people, no discernment of the signs of their time; because in their pride and narrowness of their hearts they called those whose warnings might have saved them theorists and speculators; because they refused all concession till the time had arrived when no concession would avail.

To which Croker replied as follows, in our opinion, with much propriety:

But did the nobles on that vital occasion show that blind and inflexible obstinacy which the learned gentleman has attributed to them? Did they even display the decent dignity of a deliberative council? Did they indeed exhibit a cold and contemptuous apathy to the feelings of the people, or did they not rather evince a morbid and dishonourable sensibility to every turn of the popular passion? Was it, sir, in fact, their high and haughty resistance, or was it, alas! their deplorable pusillanimity that overthrew their unhappy country? No inconsiderable portion of the nobility joined the *Tiers Etat* at once, and with headlong and heedless alacrity: the rest delayed for a short interval—a few days only of doubt and dismay—and after that short pause, those whom the learned gentleman called proud and obstinate bigots to privilege and power abandoned their most undoubted privilege and most effective power, and were seen to march in melancholy procession to the funeral of the Constitution with a fallacious appearance of freedom, but bound in reality by the invisible shackles of intimidation, goaded by the invectives of a treasonable and rancorous press, and insulted, menaced, and all but driven by the bloody hands of an infuriated populace.

And in that celebrated night which has been called "the night of sacrifices," but which is better known by the more appropriate title of "the night of insanity," when the whole frame and order of civilised society was overthrown in the delirium of popular compliance, who led the way in the giddy orgies of destruction? Alas, the nobility! Who was it that in that portentous night offered, as he said, on the altar of his country the sacrifice of the privileges of the nobility? A Montmorency! Who proposed the abolition of all feudal and seignorial rights? A Noailles! And what followed? We turn over a page or two of this eventful history, and we find the Montmorencies in exile and the Noailles on the scaffold.

We have, however, given these quotations chiefly in illustration of his style, and the early period in which it became completely formed. None of his earlier essays in the *Edin-*

burgh Review resemble his later style so much as these speeches do.

Macaulay's gift of style was like Pope's—of its own kind supreme, unapproachable, and, if we may be allowed such an expression, artificial by nature. Deficient in flexibility and compass; as inferior to Burke as Pope was to Dryden; below Johnson in elegance, and below Hume in the combination of strength, polish, and simplicity; he had something which they all three wanted, and has in consequence had a thousand readers for every one of theirs. It is not that Macaulay's own train of ideas was more distinctly visible to himself than Burke's, Johnson's, or Hume's were to them, for that is scarcely possible. No one of these three writers ever leaves us at a loss for his meaning. But they do not pointedly call attention to it. They make no allowance for that slowness of apprehension, that intellectual torpor, to which the great mass of mankind are more or less subject. They wrote only for a scholarly audience, for men whose mode of reading differed as much from that of the uncultivated crowd as the upright gait of a soldier from the slouch of a ploughboy. Consequently, they were satisfied to make clear and logical sentences without caring to knock at their readers' brains, so to speak, by concluding every other period with some peculiar emphasis. Now Macaulay wrote for the public not like a lawyer to a judge, but as an advocate addressing a jury. We cannot read a page of his works without finding ourselves continually laying stress upon particular words, whether we will or no. To such perfection has he carried this practice, that he

seldom or never stands in need of italics, and his argument remains impressed upon the mind like a clearly-marked tune upon the memory. So much, indeed, is this the case, that in his later writings his style not unfrequently degenerates into a mere jig. This fault was growing upon him in his later years; though it would hardly perhaps have impaired his popularity with the bulk of Mr. Mudie's subscribers. In fact, the public ear is becoming every day more and more attuned to this particular rhythm. It has been adopted by journalism, and is one secret of the leading articles in *The Times* newspaper. Yet, something tells us we should not like to read it straight on end for three hours. And such, indeed, is the effect produced upon us by the latter part of Lord Macaulay's history. But when the public at large became daily more habituated to this mode of writing, it was not possible that the same vivacity and directness, adorned by arts to which the journalist makes no pretence, would ever have declined in popularity with the larger class of readers. But we think it undeniable that this style *was* deteriorating; that its least meritorious points were becoming the most prominent in the last two volumes of his famous work. Never well suited to historical composition from the first, it became less and less so as he proceeded; while persons curious in such matters became proportionately more alive to its defects, after studying the pure and elevated style of Mr. Froude.

Of climax, the coping-stone of the emphatic style, Macaulay is a master; and this it is which gives to his lively and rapid antitheses a strength and cogency of their

own. After he has accumulated his evidence, and brought out point after point in his own favour with unwavering distinctness, he never fails at the right moment to give the final blow which drives his conclusion home, and leaves it embedded in our minds, to the exclusion of all subordinate ideas, which might weaken our perception of its force. Macaulay never crowds an argument. He puts no more into it than the mind can embrace at once. His readers are never in danger of losing the connexion of ideas. They are always able to bear in mind what it is that their author is proposing to prove, and to see the bearing upon that end of every syllable that he uses. By this practice too of making the most of salient points, and broad and easily-understood arguments, he always contrives to leave the impression behind him that his is the common-sense side of every question: that any objections which he has failed to notice may be subtle and ingenious, but not deserving the attention of practical men. If we could ascertain with precision what share of his enormous influence is owing to this one peculiarity, we should, perhaps, be astonished at the result. It does not, however, require much argument to show that the principles of composition which we have here ascribed to Lord Macaulay cannot easily be reconciled with a scrupulous regard for truth. The deliberate rejection of all minor points, which would mar the clearness of a statement, or refuse to come within the circle of some sweeping generalisation, must have created wrong impressions innumerable. Lord Macaulay himself, one would think, must have seen the danger. But he had so much confidence in the truth of his general views that he doubtless con-

sidered himself justified in risking something to promote their popularity. It was from the union of this conviction with an innate propensity to rhetoric that his system of composition sprang. Without the first that system would have been simply fraudulent; without the second it would of course have been impossible. But though we should not think of affixing to Lord Macaulay's style the stigma of dishonesty, it certainly indicates the existence of that lax morality which justifies the means by the end.

Lord Macaulay's method was in thorough harmony with his style; and, if possible, still more effective. He is the Life-guardsman of literature. His history is like a cavalry charge. Down go horse and man before his rapid and reckless onset. His "rush" is irresistible, save by the coolest judgment and most cultivated intellects. Ranks are broken, guns are spiked, and away sweeps the bold dragoon to ride at a fresh square. But while all is prosperous in front, what is going on behind? The forces of the enemy are closing in upon his rear doggedly and savagely, and as he looks back upon the ground he has traversed, he sees it occupied by fresh foes, whom, with all his audacity, he hesitates to attack. What he would have done we shall now never know. But of these four volumes of bold and brilliant declamation, we may well say that they are beautiful, they are magnificent, but that they are not history. Yet as with the actual exploit of war to which these words allude, so with the marvellous works to which we have applied them, the mistake is forgotten, while the glory endures for ever. Macaulay will be read, quoted, and honoured long

after his aspersions of great men, and misstatement of important truths, have been buried in oblivion. When he ceases to be regarded as a sound historian, he will be all the more loved as a delightful author: and the memory of his errors will perish when they have lost the power to mislead.

There was great unity and consistency in Macaulay as a whole. What he was in a political or literary light, that he was also morally and religiously. The great laws of moral action he reverenced as the common sense of humanity. Christianity he loved as an integral part of the British constitution for a thousand years. We say nothing now of his private or esoteric opinions upon these subjects, but it is impossible to read any of his more characteristic writings without seeing this much, that he had little sympathy with spiritualism in its most extended sense. The best token of our fitness for another world was evidently in his opinion to behave like men of this world. Had James II. been a Protestant, and William III. a Romanist, and all the other circumstances of the Revolution exactly as they were, that fact alone would not have changed his opinion of it. Men in his eyes were clearly not justified in allowing their religious convictions to stand in the way of Parliamentary Government. He is equally severe on nonjurors and Cameronians—they "were the two most remarkable specimens which the world could show of perverted absurdity." They were fools enough to believe "that their business was not to save their country, but to save their souls." In using this kind of language we would not be supposed to insinuate that Macaulay attached

no importance to the latter operation. But he was trying to draw a line which has never yet been drawn between the citizen and the individual. We may regret that a small and enthusiastic minority should in any country oppose themselves to a settlement of public affairs. But where they do so on religious grounds, it is nonsense to call them fools, unless we ourselves are inspired. This is the kind of intolerance recently rebuked by Mr. Mill; and it must be granted that in this respect Macaulay was an inveterate offender. His essays and history constantly convey the impression that in what is now called moral or religious earnestness, no less than in metaphysical attainments, he was, in proportion to the general strength of his character, and amount of his knowledge, singularly deficient. We do not know if this was the case. But his tone, when he touches on any of these subjects, is that of a cabinet minister, or an important magistrate, who has got conflicting interests to reconcile, or simple rules to enforce, which do not permit him to waste his time upon considering the abstract truth. Now this mode of treatment, while it is absolutely indispensable to persons in the position we have mentioned, is unnecessary in an historian, and downright affectation in an essayist. We have already quoted one specimen, from his history, of the thing which he abused. We will now quote from his essays a description of the class of minds he loved. The men are the great Elizabethan statesmen:

> In religious matters, however, though there is no reason to doubt that they were sincere, they were by no means zealous; none of them chose to run the smallest personal risk during the reign of Mary; none of them favoured the unhappy attempt of Northumberland in favour of

his daughter-in-law; none of them shared in the desperate councils of Wyatt. They contrived to have business on the Continent, or, if they staid in England, they heard mass and kept Lent with great decorum. When those dark and perilous years had gone by, and when the crown had descended to a new sovereign, they took the lead in the reformation of the Church. But they proceeded not with the impetuosity of theologians, but with the calm determination of statesmen. They acted not like men who considered the Romish worship as a system too offensive to God, and too destructive of souls, to be tolerated for an hour; but like men who regarded the points in dispute among Christians as in themselves unimportant, and who were not restrained by any scruple of conscience from professing, as they had before professed, the Catholic faith of Mary, the Protestant faith of Edward, or any of the numerous intermediate combinations which the caprice of Henry, and the servile policy of Cranmer had formed out of the doctrines of both the hostile parties.

Now the question which naturally arises in one's mind, after reading the above passage, is this—Did its author mean that the frame of mind he has described in it was laudable *per se*, or laudable only for the sake of certain results? We think it is hardly possible to doubt that he intended to assert the former. If so, we totally dissent from him. However desirable it may be that persons placed in public situations should act in this spirit, we doubt if the most liberal-minded Christian writers would approve of it in private individuals. The differences between the Romish system in its least Popish form, and Protestantism in its most Catholic form, as seen, for instance, in the Church of England, are such as no man *can* really think indifferent who sincerely believes in Christianity. The sacrifices and reservations which it may be allowable to make for the sake of the public good, we should be sorry to limit; though even here there are limits. But we are clearly of opinion that, *except* for so great an end as this,

such sentiments as are here imputed to Walsingham and Burleigh are not praiseworthy. Macaulay, indeed, has placed himself in a very curious position by these and countless other tacit avowals of something very like scepticism. His general views of government and history require him to applaud certain ends, while his moral temper stands in marked antagonism to the means by which they were accomplished. He loves the Reformation. But had men after his own heart been omnipotent throughout Europe in the sixteenth century, we should have had no Reformation. He loves the Revolution. But that event was not so much due to men like Somers and Halifax as to the Puritan zealots of one reign, and the episcopal champions of another. The great public events which Lord Macaulay most loved nearly all owed their birth to the feelings which he most disliked.

This defect in Lord Macaulay's moral constitution was aggravated by a corresponding defect in his mental constitution; or, perhaps, we should rather say, in his mental training. Not only does he seem to have been indifferent to truth as an abstract object, he seems not to have been acquainted with the deeper principles at stake in the religious and philosophical controversies which he undertook to discuss. In his essay, for instance, on Gladstone's "Church and State," he omits all notice of the one very point which alone gives the High-Church party any peculiar standing-ground. We mean the nature of the Sacraments. That it is which, in the Church of England, alone gives any value to the sacerdotal theory in the eyes of its believers: while it has been an accepted dogma of the Church

in all ages, that heresy, which is not deadly heresy, does not destroy the efficacy of sacerdotal functions. No defect, therefore, in any Church, short of deadly heresy, can, in the eyes of High Churchmen, be so bad as one which makes it, in fact, no Church at all. Nor can any other virtues compensate for the want of that which is the keystone of the whole system. We say that this is the cardinal point of the High-Church theory. We say it is for the sake of this alone that apostolical succession has any value in that theory; as being the means of conferring this power on the priesthood; and we add, therefore, that he who examines the doctrine of apostolical succession, without so much as alluding to the sacramental functions of the priesthood, is, to say nothing worse of him, a totally worthless guide.

We observe the same rough-and-ready style of treatment in his dealing with philosophical questions. This defect is, of course, most conspicuous in his essay upon Bacon. But it often shows itself in his theological and political discussions, too. According to the best modern authorities, he had no idea of the philosophical difficulties in which the Baconian system is still enveloped; though he is such a consummate master of his art, that it is only by comparing him with other writers on the subject that we are led to suspect the fact.* He praised Johnson's review of Soame Jenyns on the "Origin of Evil," and in a manner which would naturally lead us to suppose it was to the philosophic excellence of

* C. F. Spedding, Liebig, de Morgan; also an article in *Fraser's Magazine* for 1859.

that composition that he was referring. But as a philosophic essay, Johnson's production is trifling. Macaulay, of course, had a perfect right to consider metaphysics unworthy the attention of a man of sense. This is not the place to argue that question. But he had no right to assume it; and, unless we are very greatly mistaken, this is pretty nearly what he did. Nor would it be the only section of his opinions which he acquired in that way. This is a view of which the truth of course cannot be demonstrated. But when we find the same impression rising up like a mist from all his works in succession, it is difficult, if not impossible, to resist its influence.

Macaulay, as a critic, exhibits the same merits and defects; sense and clearness are his distinguishing characteristics. Sense to see those plain truths which critics, in their search after profundity, too often miss; and that clearness of mind which made him sure of what he meant himself, and able to convey it to his readers. These qualities are valuable in criticism, because they are essential, and because they are rare. But they will not alone carry their possessor to the summit of his art; and the summit of his art Lord Macaulay was very far from attaining. In this matter, indeed, there was what he little suspected—a strong affinity between his own mind and Dr. Johnson's. The review of Montgomery, for instance, is exactly what Johnson would have written. The spirit of it is Johnsonian throughout, and the style much more so than is commonly supposed. For instance, of the poet's lines—

> The soul aspiring pants its source to mount,
> As streams meander level with their fount.

"We take this to be," says Macaulay, "the worst similitude in the world. In the first place, no stream meanders, or can meander, level with its fount. In the next place, if streams did meander level with their founts, no two motions can be less like each other than that of meandering level and that of mounting upwards." Again: "He informs us that 'lightning is designless, and self-created.' If he can believe this, we cannot conceive why he may not believe that the whole universe is designless and self-created. A few lines before he tells us, that it is the Deity who bids 'thunder rattle from the skyey deep;' his theory, therefore, is this, that God made the thunder, and that the lightning made itself. Again, the motto of the poem of Satan is taken from the book of Job: 'Whence comest thou? From going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it.' And certainly Mr. Robert Montgomery has not failed to make his hero go to and fro, and walk up and down." Who does not recognise the likeness between these sentences and the caustic common sense, and rather materialistic satire, of the criticism on Milton and Gray? The former, says Johnson, thought that "women were made only for obedience, and men only for rebellion." He makes "one god ask another god what has become of Lycidas, and neither god can tell." In the criticism of the *Progress of Poetry* we are told, that "an epithet or metaphor drawn from nature ennobles art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from art degrades nature." Of the last stanza in the "Ode to a favourite Cat" (which jumped into a vase after some gold fish, and was drowned), which runs as follows:

> Not all that tempts some wandering eyes
> And heedless hearts is lawful prize,
> Nor all that glistens gold.

Johnson says, "If what glistened had been gold, the cat would not have gone into the water; and if she had, would not the less have been drowned." If we shut our eyes and repeat these sentences to ourselves, we may fancy them quotations from the essay on Byron or Machiavelli.

The critical powers of Lord Macaulay are, perhaps, seen to most advantage in the essays upon Byron and Madame D'Arblay. In the first of these not only is Lord Byron's poetry examined with great skill, but his position in English literature defined with great clearness. Macaulay, indeed, is never so happy as in marking out the character and influence of a school of writers. Here his aptness at seizing salient points, and his propensity to generalisation, are turned to the best account; but his special examination of Byron's poems, though just and able as far as it goes, is behind the requirements of the present day. It points out their capital defects, it exposes the affectation upon which they are based, and it deals a heavy blow at the still worse affectation of which they were the parents. But the real causes of the pleasure they produce in us he has left untouched. His criticism, in a word, is not in these days what we should call a philosophical criticism. His radical accordance with the critics of the eighteenth century is disguised by the fact that he everywhere proclaims himself their enemy. But he fights them with their own weapons. He admires much which he assumes that they would have despised, and despises much of what they unquestionably admired; but his reasons for doing so seem based upon the

old-fashioned theories. We can discover no principle of criticism in the review of Lord Byron, which would not have found ready admittance at the Turk's Head. In the earlier part of the essay, in which the transition from the ancient to the modern school of poety is described, there is a passage, indeed, which might seem at first sight to indicate more enlarged views. We mean the dissertation on "correctness" in poetry; but it is in reality an imperfect account of the subject, vindicating one sort of "correctness" with great truth and eloquence, without in the least degree affecting our judgment of the other. Of course, Lord Macaulay must have known very well what it was that Pope meant by resolving, as he said, to be "correct;" but he seems to think that, because there is another and higher kind of correctness to which Scott and Wordsworth have attained, that a false correctness only was understood by Pope and Addison. Now this is obviously not the case. Because Pope went wrong in the moonlight scene of Homer, is no proof that he erred in cashiering alexandrines. Nor was Addison's observance of the unities necessarily mistaken, because Cato happened to be less real than William of Deloraine.

If, however, we were requested to point out what we considered to be his two ablest pieces of criticism we should refer, we think, to the essays on Machiavelli and Madame D'Arblay. In the former, he has given us that famous critique of English comedy as it was moulded by the hands of Congreve and his successors, which is far better than anything he has said in his special essay on the subject, and, indeed, has become the *locus classicus* relating to it.

That is as true a piece of criticism as was ever penned. In the second, he has laid down that broad distinction which has subsequently served to discriminate our two great living humorists: we mean the distinction between caricature and the exhibition of character, and he is, as far as we know, entitled to the credit of having laid it down first.

But not only were Macaulay's critical faculties of nearly the same calibre as Johnson's, they were invested with at least an equal amount of prejudice. This is most conspicuously shown, as was only natural, in his own essay upon Johnson. In this article he attributes opinions to the doctor which we sincerely believe he never uttered, and comments upon some which he did, now with almost ludicrous severity, and now with almost wilful blindness. We don't believe that Dr. Johnson preferred "Pope's Iliad" to "Homer's." We do not believe he called Gray a barren rascal. We don't believe that if any impartial judge should now read through Johnson's criticism on "Paradise Lost," he would think it either "wretched" or "ignominious." And we do believe that very good reasons exist for celebrating a British writer in Latin, which do not exist for covering the Roman arches of triumph with Greek inscriptions, or for commemorating the deeds of the heroes of Thermopylæ in Egyptian hieroglyphics. All this kind of criticism overshoots its mark. Dr. Johnson's main objection to "Paradise Lost" was its want of human interest, as far as the action was concerned. When he said it was only not the first heroic poem in the world because it had not been written first, he had surely said all that the most enthusiastic Miltonian could require. The faults of detail

which Johnson points out, such as the allegory of Sin and Death, seem to us real. To what extent they may be overshadowed by the magnificence of the whole poem, or how far the uncertain light, the general vagueness and intangibility, in which a poem on such a subject is necessarily clothed, may be held to justify any kind of inconsistencies, is a separate question. But we cannot see that a critic who refuses to allow this is necessarily wretched or ignominious. The case of the Latin epitaphs is very soon disposed of. Johnson's argument was, that men of European fame should be commemorated in some one language which all the educated classes in Europe would be likely to understand. In his day, Latin was this sort of common language; and is so, to some extent, still. Whatever the reasons may be that are thought powerful enough to outweigh this particular one, Macaulay's attempted *reductio ad absurdum* is clearly a failure. For neither Greek nor Egyptian ever attained the same circulation, or served the same public uses in the ancient world that Latin has done in the modern one. On the whole, then, we should assign to Macaulay, as a critic, the same rank which he himself assigns to Dryden as a poet—not in the first-class, but inferior to none in the second. Vigorous common sense, a manly and healthy tone of mind, extensive knowledge, and a carefully-cultivated taste, were all his. But Nature, so bountiful in other respects, had denied him that analytic subtlety which is as necessary to criticism as the microscope is to science. She had treated him as the muse did the minstrel in the "Odyssey."

Our own opinion of Macaulay's value as an historian

may be gleaned from what has already been said. In addition to his other merits, he possessed to perfection the faculty which Dr. Arnold especially observed in Mitford: the faculty of appreciating the public events of past ages through sympathy with those of his own. But in proportion as Macaulay was nearer than Mitford was to the past scenes which he describes, and at the same time more intimately connected with the present, does his narrative partake, to a still greater extent, of the character of an apology. His history, in fact, flowed from his politics, and not his politics from his history. He took his creed from the Whigs, on Goldsmith's principle of taking his religion from the priest; and though he was doubtless a voracious reader, it is not equally clear that he was a conscientious student. He found himself possessed of a faculty which placed him above the necessity of research. With that he could command the homage of the people at will. With that magic gift of style he would carve his way to the highest places of fortune. The party under whom he was to serve was ready to his hand. His course lay clear before him; and, having once given his allegiance, he continued their faithful and successful soldier to his life's end. What sort of history would be written by such a man as this it is superfluous to inquire. Pope tells us that when he was a young man he plunged into the controversy between the Anglican and Romish churches, and was a Protestant and a Papist by turns, according to the last book he read. A man who read politics in the same way, might continue for a long time fluctuating between Whig and Tory. But this was not Macaulay's method. When he got to a Whig

stratum of fact, he wisely stopped digging, preconvinced of the worthlessness of everything that lay beneath. *His* mind was already made up, and he only read for arguments to help out a foregone conclusion. Hence, no doubt, the astonishing errors which he committed in so short a compass. It is obvious, moreover, that any man must sit down to the history of a particular epoch or reign with a much stronger bias concerning its events than is felt by an historian of the whole national life. It will probably be that very bias which, in the first instance, prompted him to the work; nor will he be so likely to see events in their just proportions and relations, to be tolerant of adverse opinions, and to suspect his own, as he who has surveyed history on a broader scale, and examined it from a more commanding height. Whatever advantages the system of writing history by periods may possess in other respects, it is certain that impartiality is not one of them. But after all, perhaps, it is to the idea of history which Macaulay proposed to himself, as much as to any peculiarities of temperament, or accidents of influence, that we must look for an explanation of the character of the work which he has given us. Thirty years ago there was a growing feeling that many elements both of interest and instruction had been too much neglected by historians. Macaulay notices it in his essay upon history in the *Edinburgh Review*, and Dr. Arnold, in his lectures upon modern history. The latter writer laid a special stress upon geography as one of them; the former rather upon the dress, architecture, and domestic habits of the period to be illustrated. But both alike saw that a great step was to be made in historical composition by admitting into the nar-

rative much which earlier historians had rejected as unworthy of its dignity. But Macaulay's language on the subject is too much like that of one who regarded history as an art. Of course we do not mean that he failed to recognise its final cause. But he evidently attached a disproportionate value to it as a picture. His natural propensity shows itself as clearly in his description of the model historian as the natural propensity of Dr. Arnold does in his:

"If such a man," says the Essayist, "as we are supposing, should write the history of England, he would assuredly not omit the battles, the sieges, the negotiations, the seditions, the ministerial changes. But with these he would intersperse the details which are the charm of historical romances. At Lincoln cathedral there is a beautiful painted window which was made by an apprentice out of the pieces of glass which had been rejected by his master. It is so far superior to every other in the church, that, according to the tradition, the vanquished artist killed himself from mortification." "Sir Walter Scott," he continues, "has filled up these fragments and turned them to admirable account. But a truly great historian would reclaim these materials. . . . . We should not then have to look for the wars and votes of the Puritans in Clarendon, and for their phraseology in 'Old Mortality;' for one-half of King James in 'Hume,' and the other half in the 'Fortunes of Nigel.'"

"The early part of our imaginary history would be rich with colouring from romance. Society would be shown from the highest to the lowest. Pilgrim on his rout—the outlaw in his den—the friar in the chimney-corner." "Palmers, minstrels, crusaders—the stately monastery—with the s. ch. in its refectory and high mass in its chapel. The manor-house with its hunting and hawking, the tournament with the heralds and ladies, the trumpets and the cloth of gold, would give life and truth to the representation."

But he prudently adds in conclusion, that "An historian such as we have been attempting to describe, would, indeed, be an intellectual prodigy."

Let us now turn to Dr. Arnold:

"Now," says he "this great qualification in an historian is an earnest craving after truth — an utter impatience not of falsehood merely, but of error. This is a very different thing, be it observed, from a mere absence of dishonesty or impartiality."

He then goes on to notice the *ἀπαλαιπωρία πρὸς τὴν ζητήσιν τῆς ἀληθείας*, complained of by Thucydides, and to lay down a variety of tests whereby the credibility of an historian may be gauged: noticing particularly a style of unvarying brilliance as one that should lead us to suspect the author's soundness. But Dr. Arnold himself was the very reverse of a cold or indifferent historian. He more than once calls attention to the distinction between indifference and impartiality, and bids us beware of confounding "a decided preference for one cause above another with a misrepresentation of the arts and characters of the men engaged." The first, he repeatedly maintains, is inevitable in any man whose opinion is worth having, and he would not, therefore, object to him for writing a Whig or Tory history, provided he did not misrepresent Whigs or Tories. The precise value of this statement may be differently estimated. We merely quote it to show that Dr. Arnold is, for our present purpose, an unexceptionable witness. He would not have thought the worse of any historian for holding strong party views, but he thought that, even so, he could make truth, for its own sake, the predominant object of his work, as, indeed, we find to have been the case with Mr. Froude, who commenced his investigation of the reign of Henry VIII. with one set of opinions, and concluded it with another. Now this, we think, was not the view of history

that was uppermost in Lord Macaulay's mind. He did not consider that it was his business to discover the truth. That, in his eyes, had been discovered already. He had to narrate the facts in which that truth lay imbedded; and these he was at liberty to narrate in any way that he thought likely to prove the most attractive, or that was most agreeable to his own genius.

Public opinion, however, is in a fair way of recovery from the wrench which Lord Macaulay gave it. Men's minds, we trust, are awakened to the real character of his work: and will, ere long, be able to assign it its proper rank in the literature of the world. By the side of Livy and Virgil, whom, in the charm of his narrative, the splendour of his diction, and the character of his motives, he so nearly resembled, is the place we should choose for Lord Macaulay.

To separate Macaulay the Politician from Macaulay the Historian might seem, at first sight, an unnecessary labour. But in order to complete our idea of the man, it may be proper to consider briefly what his relations with the Whig party in the State really were. "Much," it has been said, "may be done with a Scotchman, if he be caught young;" but Macaulay was caught too young. To a man whose destiny it is to be a professional politician, this cannot happen. In that case, familiarity with the proceedings of the House of Commons, and a thorough command over the means by which it is most easily governed, may be considered to compensate for any contraction of mind which premature devotion to business is calculated to produce; a contraction, moreover, which is only likely to prove disadvantageous on rare

and peculiar occasions. But Macaulay was not a professional politician, and his early success exercised an influence on his mind, which he had no subsequent opportunity of modifying. At the age of three or four-and-twenty, he became mixed up with a great party struggle, of which the like had not been seen in England for nearly fifty years. It was a moment at which the Whig party was seen to peculiar advantage, and the Tories to peculiar disadvantage. Canning was the only man among them likely to impress a young man's imagination: and Canning the Tories half repudiated. The times had changed since the Whigs were worshipping Napoleon, and Wellington was saving Europe. When Macaulay joined the party, they had well nigh paid their penalty. The burden and heat of the day had not much longer to be borne. He found them popular, patriotic, and vigorous: with well-defined objects before them, and pressing onwards to the victory, of which the dawn was not obscurely visible. He remained in their ranks till the battle was won; and, like the battle of the Nile, it was not a victory, but a conquest. In all that mighty and intoxicating triumph Macaulay shared, and then, when the first faint symptoms of dissension and weakness became apparent in his party, their future eulogist departed. During the four years that he was absent in India, the Whigs threw away all the popularity which the previous four years had brought them. But their young and able champion was spared the spectacle of their fall. His reminiscences of 1831 were defiled by no intervening associations. He had not trampled upon Peel, only to fawn upon O'Connell. He was unimplicated in that financial mismanagement

which made the return of the Tories to power a national necessity. In his eyes the Whig party were still invested with all the splendour of success, and all the attractions of constitutional Liberalism. He came back, it is true, and found them as low in public favour as they had been thirty years before; but he had not witnessed the process of degradation. It was easy to attribute it to popular caprice; and with the return of the Whigs to the opposition benches, they were able to assume a sufficiently dignified attitude to arrest the necessity for inquiry. It is doubtful, moreover, whether Macaulay, on his return to England, still continued to look forward to a political career. Even if he did, it seems likely that he soon relinquished the intention, and he was thus spared the necessity of asking himself certain questions which it might have proved difficult to answer. We should fancy that he must have steadily shut his eyes to the behaviour of the Whig party since 1846, and that he would have had little sympathy with the manœuvres by which they subsequently sought to win the confidence of the Radicals. What scope there might be in the existing state of public affairs for the exercise of pure Whig principles, he probably omitted to consider. His mind was wholly with the past. His first experience of public life was brief and brilliant; and had stamped a character upon his mind which was never afterwards changed. His political creed remained stationary from that moment, growing in intensity, but closed to impressions from without. His hatred of the Stuarts was deeper in 1849 than in 1830, and in 1850 than in 1840. But his reverence for the British constitution—for law, order, and prescriptive right, seems to have

deepened in proportion, till we believe that in theory he was as sound a Conservative as Lord Lyndhurst or Mr. Henley.

We think, therefore, it may be safely admitted that Lord Macaulay's efforts to exalt the Whig party were undertaken without reference to the actual position of that party in the middle of the nineteenth century. His political principles were almost exactly the same as Burke's. Nature intended him for a Conservative, but accident had made him a Whig: and. thus he invested Whig principles with an air of sound and sensible constitutionalism, which is certainly not a part of their essence, but of which modern Whig politicians have been only too glad to take advantage. It is a curious coincidence, that just as circumstances removed him from the Whig party of the present, immediately after their accomplishment of a great work, and before the ill effects of undue prosperity began to show themselves, so death has removed him from the Whig party of the past, at almost an exactly similar conjuncture. The good which the Whigs had effected by the Revolution, had few drawbacks under the resolute rule of William III. The evil began to show itself in the reign of Anne, and reached its culminating point under her two successors. The good accomplished by the Reform Bill was seen at once. The incompetency of the Reformers to govern the country with success showed itself only by degrees. As Lord Macaulay has been relieved from the necessity of traversing the period of their decline after 1714, so was he released from participation in their errors after 1832. Thus, both his life and his works come in contact with them at

their two most flourishing periods, and the effect of this circumstance upon a mind so prone to generalisation as Lord Macaulay's, is easily to be comprehended. He saw in the Whigs only the conservative reformers of the constitution he adored: he knew nothing of them as the authors of parliamentary corruption, and the abettors of French ambition. He saw they had preserved one branch of the constitution in 1688. He was not obliged to see in them the violators of another branch of it 1783. He saw, as he thought, amid much which was unsatisfactory in the first Reform Bill, a laudable effort on their part to conform to precedent, and preserve the ascendancy of property. He did not trouble himself much about their subsequent alliance with the disciples of numerical representation.

Such is our estimate of Lord Macaulay. That his death should have been regarded as a public loss was natural and was just. We doubt not that we are thereby deprived of much delightful amusement, and much practical wisdom. But we think it fortunate for his own fame that he has escaped from the history of the Georges. He could have added nothing to his reputation, and he might have taken something away. As it stands at present, there are not very many to surpass it. As an orator, a critic, and an historian, he ranks higher than any other man who ever combined the three professions. As a writer of the English language, he takes place with those great masters who have founded schools of composition, and been followed by generations of disciples.

POPULAR HISTORY,* 1859.

It is reasonable to suppose that in one at least of the three qualifications which are said to be the indispensable constituents of a trustworthy historian we excel our progenitors even more, perhaps, than our posterity will excel us. Our sources of information are better ascertained; the range of our curiosity is widened; and we have learned to acknowledge the importance of materials which were formerly neglected as trivial. Of the other two, judgment, or the power of discriminating between truth and error, is of course a quality of the individual and not of the epoch. And so at first sight would seem to be the third essential, namely, honesty, or the wish to narrate only what is true. A moment's reflection, however, will convince us that such is only partially the case. We may be by nature ardent lovers of truth, and have no other desire than to see the ultimate triumph of right principles. Abstractedly, we may be quite ready to entertain the question of what right principles are; and willing, if left alone, to investigate the facts of history, with a view to this exclusive object.

* "Popular History of England." By Charles Knight. Vol. v.

But the conditions of this frame of mind, always difficult to be secured, are daily approximating to impossibility. It is bootless to inquire who was the original offender. But manifestly the first composer of what is now known as a "party history" was the inaugurator of a state of things which has made anything else almost unattainable. The historical student, whose opinions are only held provisionally, taking up a work in which facts are distorted, and motives imputed to the disadvantage of those opinions, is almost inevitably converted from a philosopher into a partisan. He retorts in kind: the zeal with which he attacks the exaggerations of a predecessor is mistaken for the afflatus of pure truth: he is himself insensibly led into kindred exaggerations; and, objectively at least, his love of truth becomes altogether dwarfed or suspended by his more active detestation of error. We think, then, that in the case of English history, the difficulty of arriving at the truth cannot be said to be sensibly diminished; since, alongside of our increased research, and newly-found materials, have sprung up new passions, animosities, and ambitions, prompting to fresh distortions, and altering our delusions in kind, but not reducing them in quantity. To require that an historian should possess immunity from the errors so begotten would be Utopian. But what we think we are fairly entitled to ask is, that he should not be ignorant of his liability to them.

But while the intrinsic difficulties of history, arising from human frailty and the complications of civilisation, remain as great as they ever were, or greater, a new one has arisen,

peculiar to modern times, in our method of narration and composition. That very appreciation of minor phenomena to which we have already pointed, as an element of our increased knowledge, at once creates the necessity for higher powers in the historian, while at the same time holding out a dangerous temptation to writers of inferior calibre. To make a right use of such materials as we are here speaking of—to distinguish the valuable from the worthless—so to weave them into our narrative, that they act as imperceptible confirmations of the theory we are enforcing, without distracting attention from the main course of events—demands, we need scarcely say, a union of historical philosophy and high literary art, which was not absolutely essential either to a Hume or a Gibbon. On the other hand, the undoubted facilities afforded by this method for acquiring the reputation of an historian, with only the qualifications of an antiquary, are such as to allure into this department of literature a large class of writers whose vocation it assuredly is not. The accumulated array of social and domestic details, which now swell the bulk of our histories, affords scope for picturesque description without exacting the exercise of original thought, and are, accordingly, a not unfrequent symptom of intellectual poverty: as the complete and elaborate Shakspearian revivals which constitute one great feature of our contemporary drama conceal for the moment that dearth of histrionic talent which, on reflection, they do but render more apparent. We are far from denying the improvement which has thus been effected, either in the one case or the other. But the improvement may be carried too far; and the sacrifice it involves may be excessive, and even

now a class of works is daily being produced among us, in which the clothes, utensils, food, and drink of our ancestors, occupy a larger share of attention than their laws, their manners, or their principles. We do not complain of the existence of such works in the abstract; on the contrary, they are both profitable and entertaining. But we object to their being spitted upon a slender thread of narrative, and served up to the world as history.

But these inherent difficulties, which beset the modern historian to whatever rank in literature he may aspire, are all and each aggravated when he addresses himself to a popular audience. The less educated the reader, the more does he require the amplest possible enumeration of particulars, and the sooner is he wearied of reading them. Generalisations of every kind must be done to his hand, while whatever savours of compression or abridgment will, on him, at least, be lost labour. It has been said by one who understood the subject well, *i.e.* that he was "convinced by long experience that most readers found it altogether impossible to impress upon their memories a mere abridgment of history; the number of names and dates crowded into a small space is overwhelming to them, and the absence of details in the narrative makes it impossible to communicate to it much of interest." This is pre-eminently true of history that is addressed to the multitude.

Finally we have to consider what special qualifications are necessary to the regular historian. Now, in what is called a "Popular History," there is necessarily a strong temptation to pander to popular prejudices. A history which is not intended for all the world, and for all time, will not, it may

be thought, be too curiously investigated; while the historian, who depends upon the people, to a great extent, for his popularity and his profits, will, naturally, like the preacher who is dependent on his congregation, be always under strong inducements to flatter their self-esteem, varnish their failings, and depreciate their superiors. The power, then, of resisting this temptation is, perhaps, the foremost virtue we should desiderate in our "Popular Historian." In the second place would be required the almost equally rare faculty of sympathising with the popular point of view, without, of necessity, accepting it; and of thoroughly comprehending what the people require to have told them, united with that wide and well-digested learning which is seldom acquired without long seclusion from the world. The Popular Historian should be one, in fact, of whom it might be said he would have been a demagogue had he not been a philosopher. In the third place, it is necessary that he should have deeply studied the political and social problems of his own time, and have mastered, instead of being mastered by, the passions and prejudices of the hour. A history of England, written for the people, by an author combining all these qualifications, is, we are aware, rather to be wished for than expected. But that is no reason why we should not hold them up as the proper standard of excellence, and do our best to expose the too prevalent fallacy, that what are called "popular works" are necessarily easier of execution than works not professing that character. A little history is decidedly a dangerous thing: and more especially for a class of readers who are more likely than others to mistake it for a great deal.

Before proceeding to illustrate these observations from the pages of Mr. Charles Knight, we wish to state one general objection that we entertain to the entire school of writers represented by him. Among many very admirable qualities which their works display, and many useful results which they have effected, one most unfortunate mistake is almost always conspicuous. We mean the theory according to which the people of this country are represented as having been from the beginning divided into two hostile armies, the one seeking to defend or to augment, the other to diminish or to destroy a mass of oppressive and tyrannous laws, privileges, and customs. We no more believe this to have been the case in the thirteenth century than in the nineteenth. Then, as now, society was painfully working its way through the special problems allotted to it. The action of its governing forces was more rude and abrupt; and when they came into collision with an obstacle strong enough to resist them, the shock was more violent. But the legitimate extent of that action has not even yet been precisely determined. And there are evils now existing among us, which are every year threatened with extended legislative interference, though not more deserving of repression than some of those, the forcible repulsion of which is a count in the indictment against our ancestors. The state of England, when our severest statutes against vagrancy were enacted, was so bad, as to make that evil fully as conspicuous and injurious as prostitution, for instance, is at present. We read of an ambassador and his whole suite being robbed and stripped upon the highway. The insecurity of life and property had become intolerable.

In addition to this, while the "valiant beggar" was thus roaming over the country, living at free quarters, and levying his taxes as he would, the fields were lying barren for want of labour, and honest men were starving that vagabonds might be idle and "valiant." That laws of some sort should have been passed to meet this crying grievance we suppose not the boldest "popular" champion will deny; and it is nonsense to complain of their severity, when severity was congenial to the whole tone of public thought upon the subject, both then and for centuries afterwards. If a penal statute was enacted at all in those days, as a matter of course it was what we now call severe. Nobody complained of that. Human life was less valued, not merely by knights and nobles, but by all men; and whatever the existence of such a feeling may be thought to prove against the age in general, it proves nothing more against one class of society than against another. We say, therefore, that this penal legislation against vagrancy was just as natural and defensible in the days of the Plantagenets, as penalties against the promoters of the so-called "social evil" are in our own days. If society was answerable for the former evil by providing no support for the poor to keep pace with the progressive extinction of villeinage, it is answerable for the latter, by the ban placed on early marriages, and by various other social conventions. Nor have we much doubt that even an increase of severity in our mode of dealing with this class of offenders would be approved by a majority of the British people. Again, if we take the compulsory apportionment of wages by which it was sought to defeat the combinations of workmen, who took advantage of the

scarcity of their own commodity to demand ruinous prices for it—has not that, granting it even to have been the tyrannical and selfish policy which our author represents it, has not that, too, been paralleled in the present day? What is the truck system, and other abominations of our manufacturing towns, which have been supported in the name of law and order, but devices to "keep the labouring class in subjection to their lords and masters?" Viewed simply in its economical aspect, it was probably an error; though the entire code of political economy is, it may fairly be presumed, one to be unfolded by degrees, and fully applied only when nations have arrived at manhood. But granting the error to the fullest extent, it was still one in which the whole nation were participators. Nor do we find in any of the petitions against particular rates of payment presented by this or that body of artificers any intimation *that the principle* of assessment was deemed wrong, but only the amount in that particular instance. These two examples are as good as any others to show the force of the objection we have raised. Mistaken ideas of government are never confined to the governing class alone. In England they have almost always been the reflex of the mind of society. Religious persecution—abuse of prerogative—and all the many forms in which they have at different times manifested themselves—have never been entirely forced upon a reluctant people by their rulers, but have invariably represented, as well, a strong national feeling. When the two have been divorced, the government has as invariably fallen. And what is called class injustice will be generally found to be the result of mistaken opinions, permeating all

classes alike, but which only one is strong enough to enforce in its own favour. What, therefore, is called the injustice and oppression of the feudal times, was, we are confident, not the result of deliberate tyranny, but, as far as it went, of simple ignorance. Nor, furthermore, can men's ignorance of political economy be imputed to them as a crime any more than their ignorance of steam or electricity.

Till, then, our "popular historians" shall approach their subject in a more enlarged and less sectarian frame of mind; till they shall be able to take a comprehensive view of the life of England, and scrutinise her progress as "a whole:" and comprehend the absurdity of supposing that there was any such inherent superior vigour in the British peasant, that the aristocracy could not have kept him down here as they did elsewhere, had such been their object—we shall never have a satisfactory "Popular History." When the fact that English society has all along been moving together, and that the jars and disputes between classes are rather to be likened to quarrels among members of one family, than to feuds between distinct tribes; when it is acknowledged that what we now call tyranny and misrule was very often but the sincere efforts of a government groping in the dark, to find its way into the light; when credit is given for good intentions, where good intentions were more probable than bad; then, and not till then, shall we have a narrative of England's fortunes which the poor man may read without feeling strengthened in his suspicions of the rich; or seeing in strikes, trades unions, rick-burning, and other demonstrations of popular wrath, the lawful action of an injured people teaching their oppressors

to tremble. The pardonable mistake of the foreigner, who sees in an English street-row the beginning of a revolution, is repeated without excuse by those writers who infer from the turbulent complaints of the British artisan five hundred years ago, that he was the victim of systematic tyranny.

We would not have it supposed that, by prefixing these remarks to a notice of Mr. Charles Knight's History, we intend to accuse him of all the crimes and misdemeanors herein set down. But we shall not affect to deny that we consider him obnoxious to the worst of them. The tone of his introduction to the first volume was quite sufficient to tell us the line he meant to take. He does not aspire, he says, to "the dignity of history," yet he professes to write a work that shall supersede Hume, whom he mentions in very disparaging terms, and ignore Lord Mahon, Mr. Adolphus, Mr. Massey, Sir A. Alison, and Miss Martineau, whom he does not mention at all. In fact, one would imagine from the tone of this preface that he was ignorant of the existence of these latter histories: since he tells us, that for the century and a half succeeding the Revolution, we have nothing to trust to but Smollet and continuations of Smollett. However, this is probably only the result of a defective style, which is visible throughout the work. Not affecting, then, the dignity of history, he "is not careful about vindicating philosophy teaching by example." A phrase which he handles much as if it contained some trap into which he might unadvisedly fall, and were a cunning device of scholars to exalt the art of history to a rank which it does not deserve. Having thus secured

himself from any suspicion of pedantry, he proceeds to tell us that—

> It is not too much to say that the actual position of this kingdom, its relation to foreign countries, the character of its people, the principles of its institutions, the elements of its wealth, the duties of its government, the reciprocal obligations of subject to subject, and the bond of all to the State—that these cannot be truly understood without a general knowledge of our history, and that whoever rejects that knowledge as less essential . . . . than the classics, makes a mistake which, &c. &c. &c.

Why, it certainly is not "too much" to say this. That history is history, and that he who is ignorant of the one cannot truly understand the other, does not seem at first sight a very presumptuous observation. But the writer, having planted his foot firmly on this solid truism, proceeds, as the reader will observe, to deliver that favourite thrust at scholastic acquirements which authors of this kind seem to think it necessary to "lay," like a ghost, before they can proceed in peace upon their journey. History is not dignified, and it is not philosophy, but still, such as it is, it is infinitely superior to classics. Having thus relieved his mind, he goes on to say that "all we justly pride ourselves upon, whether in our institutions or our national character, has resulted from the principle of growth, and not of creation." A sentiment undeniably quite true in itself, but not, that we can see, furnishing any fresh reason why our standard histories should be thrown on one side to make room for Mr. Knight. When, however, we have read a little further on, we come to a sentence which does, we frankly confess, afford the justification in question. No

other historian has certainly undertaken to depict "the legal control of the insolent baron in his castle by the resistance of the sturdy mechanic in his cottage;" and that Mr. Knight has, in point of fact, written his history throughout very much in the kind of spirit which this single sentence would indicate is our chief ground of complaint against him.

This, then, is our first charge against the author of the "Popular History;" that he has in the main, and notwithstanding his declaration to the contrary in his introduction, adopted a narrow and vulgar conception of English history. A conception which, notwithstanding that it is coupled with the promise of special investigation into the character of society and those phenomena which the dignity of history is presumed to look down upon, reduces men, nevertheless much nearer the condition of automata, and ignores their individual humanity to a much greater extent than that which it affects to supersede. But the English aristocracy, at all events, has never acted with that mechanical precision, that unity of purpose, and that disregard of individual impulses, which are essential to the truth of Mr. Knight's hypothesis. As part of the great feudal organisation of Europe, they inevitably acted up to the idea which was the key-stone of that organisation: the idea being, as Mr. Froude and others before him have clearly shown, that every man in a commonwealth, like a soldier in a regiment, had a prescribed place in which it behoved him to stay. The idea, indeed, is not peculiar to feudalism, for it entered largely into the Platonic scheme of good government. But, as first carried out into action upon a large scale in feudalism,

it does not seem generally to be denied that the good which is effected at a certain stage of the world's history was vastly superior to the evil. No doubt certain apparent hardships, such, for instance, as the law for confining labourers to a certain locality, flowed, after a time, from the attempt to sustain this system. But what we have to regard is its original intention. And if it can be shown, as beyond all controversy it can, that this was praiseworthy, then no posterior ill effects accompanying its decline can justify the reproaches which our "Popular Historian" heaps upon it. To stigmatise, for instance, the Statute of Labourers as "selfish," seems to us to betray a singular want of historical insight. It was no more selfish than our taxation of America was selfish; than our maintenance of Jewish or Roman Catholic Disabilities was selfish. All three, no doubt, were expressive of a sentiment in favour of vested rights. But we may be sure, that in addition to this was the conviction that as these principles had, on the whole, worked well for mankind hitherto, it was wise and right to perpetuate them. He who first sees when a principle has done his work, and that a new one is rapidly, if invisibly, growing up to thrust it out, deserves veneration. But the mass who fail to see this are not, therefore, necessary deserving of obloquy, or amenable to the charge of "selfishness." Those who enacted the Statute of Labourers did it without any suspicion that a new order of things was coming up with which such regulations were inconsistent; and, what is more, those who petitioned against it did so without any idea that the old order of things was departing. But these are ways of looking at questions to which

Mr. Knight and his school are strangers. With them the mistakes of the aristocracy are always crimes, and the crimes of the people are always mistakes. And so on and on, down through the whole avenue of English history, the aforesaid "insolent baron" and "sturdy mechanic" are for ever confronting one another in a hostile attitude: setting a perpetual example of social schism, and indicating a standing severance of all social ties, which we should almost instinctively refuse to credit, even if facts did not come to our assistance.

In the second place, we have to observe that Mr. Knight undoubtedly comes under the category of those writers who have carried the modern system of historical composition to an excess. We hardly know, however, that we have any right to complain of this in the present instance. Our author expressly ranks himself with the antiquaries rather than the historians, and this candid confession must be allowed to exempt him from the censure we pronounced on those who act as if there were no difference between the two. Indeed, were we to subtract from Mr. Knight's volumes all that relates to the dress, the food, the lodging, the amusements, and the vices of successive generations, there would be very little left. History, he evidently thinks, without costume, is as worthless as, according to the old distich, a man is without his breeches. But his idea of dress seem to correspond to that of the stage coachman in Washington Irving, whose notion of perfection was to wear as many clothes as possible. Accordingly, Mr. Knight half smothers poor Clio under the weight of domestic and social details, through which she occasionally

shows the tip of her nose, or her little finger, but is never able to stand upright, or move with grace and freedom. Still—*tractent fabrilia fabri*—here Mr. Knight is at home, and we cannot quarrel with him for having laid out his strength where it would produce the most effective results. Moreover, as his strictly political views are, in our opinion, so shallow, we are not sorry that his pen should so often lead him away to subjects with which he is comparatively familiar; albeit, such deviation may be detrimental to his fame, whether as an historical authority or as a literary artist. In the course of our article we shall give some specimens of the style adopted in the construction of these social panoramas, of which some are exceedingly creditable both to his taste and his industry.

Thirdly, we must note, what is probably an inevitable result of the method he has chosen, the loose and inelegant diction in which his regular narrative is written. Events are thrown together as on to a dust-heap; no pains have been taken to ensure either forcible expression or rhythmical arrangement of words. To use a military phrase, his sentences stand greatly in need of "dressing." They have none of that closeness, smartness, and precision which is necessary to lay hold of the reader's mind, and to prevent him from forgetting what he has learned. To compress the whole history of England into the space which Mr. Knight allots for it, and impart to a narrative so composed either much vigour of thought or much grace of language, was, we are aware, a task of no common difficulty, and we should have been greatly surprised if Mr. Knight had succeeded in performing it. But, nevertheless, we are sorry, for his own

sake, that a work, intended to be pre-eminently the young man's History of England, should be pervaded by so monotonous a tone, and be so deficient in that proper contrast of events which, as Dr. Arnold truly says, can alone render history intelligible. If "the young man of eighteen" takes up Mr. Knight's volumes to ascertain how his ancestors ate, drank, slept, shaved, washed, and dressed themselves, he will still be driven to the "philosophic scoffer" to know how they governed England, how they framed her noble constitution, and founded her superb empire.

We have now given a sufficient general description both of Mr. Knight's History and of the school to which it belongs. To examine the "Popular History" in detail, would require an article as long as our entire number, and would scarcely repay the trouble. But, in order completely to establish the justice of both our censure and our praise, as well as to point out one or two current fallacies, to which writers of a much higher calibre than Mr. Knight have lent the sanction of their name, we shall select a certain number of passages for as brief comment as may be.

The relations between the cultivators and the owners of the soil having already served to illustrate one of our positions, the question need not now be reopened. We shall only, therefore, add to our previous remarks upon this subject, that Mr. Knight is unfair to Mr. Froude in hinting that he defends the conduct of the Legislature upon economical grounds. Mr. Froude more than once expressly guards himself from being supposed to mean anything of the kind. While all we ourselves require to be admitted is the absence of any proof that the intention of the governing classes was culpable, and the existence of strong counter-

evidence in favour of its having been laudable. Because the restrictions upon labour did not work well, we are not necessarily to conclude that those who imposed them were actuated by purely selfish motives; while wholly to ignore the ἠθικὴ πίστις afforded in the lives and deaths of so many of the feudal aristocracy, is scarcely excusable even on the low theory of history which Mr. Knight has adopted. Such, however, is the palpable error into which he is continually falling. As soon as he can show that legislation was unsuccessful, he invariably assumes that the legislator was unjust. Nor, indeed, on this particular subject is Mr. Knight always consistent with himself; as in one place he speaks of "helpless misery existing alongside of callous indulgence," when higher up, on the very same page, he had told us that the labourers were "carefully provided for," "not overworked, having their hours of recreation," and "not destitute of the family affections." Now, if Mr. Knight had intended that this description should apply only to the servants of the Bishop of Hereford, whose household he is here describing, he should have said so, and we have no doubt he would have said so. But such was clearly not his meaning. He is accepting their condition, which he pictures to himself in the above terms, as typical of the whole class; and yet not fifty lines farther on he can speak of this very same class as affording a spectacle of "helpless misery." "Effect" appears to be, in too many instances, the sole object at which he aims; or, if we are misjudging him, our error is but an additional proof of what we had previously advanced; the difficulty, namely, of making historical theories thoroughly intelligible, without the aid of a clearer and stronger style, a more logical

method, and more concentrative power, than has fallen to the share of Mr. Knight.

On the subject of the Church, in the thirteenth century, Mr. Knight observes, that—

> The learning of the cloister was not tainted with the miserable political superstition of later times of the Church, when the king was set up as the image of God upon earth, above all human law, and beyond the reach of punishment for misdoing. The slavish doctrine of non-resistance was not yet preached in parliaments and synods. The churchmen of the thirteenth century were, amidst all the luxurious corruptions which have been imputed to them, a sturdy race, who knew the value of civil freedom, and battled for it as bravely as the men of the sword.

And a little farther on he denounces Hume bitterly, for the account which that historian has given of the contest between the crown and the barons in the reign of Henry VI., and, reminding us that De Montfort was supported by the clergy, attributes Hume's unfavourable description of him to his love of kings and his "hatred of priests." Now, this is an expression which serves Mr. Knight's turn very well in this particular passage, though it is quite inconsistent with his general views to deny that the feudal aristocracy were tyrants; but this is just another sample of what we have to complain of throughout, namely, that he blows hot and cold upon particular characters and policies, according to their capability for producing the desired effect at a given moment. But the fact is that neither the aristocracy nor the Church are to be judged of by particular individuals or special transactions. If Stephen Langton "knew the value of civil freedom" so well as to aid in Magna Charta, and refuse to obey the Pope, what did A'Becket know about it? If Simon de Montfort befriended the people,

what of Front de Bœuf? If the feudal barons were so devoted to the liberty of the subject, why did they confine the benefits of Magna Charta to their own order, or refuse the emancipation of their villeins at the suggestion of King Richard II.? For ourselves, we can have no doubt that, however excellent was the conduct of the Church on particular occasions, her general attitude depended on the most simple and intelligible motives. Previous to the Reformation, the Church had more to fear from the crown than from the nation; after that event, she had more to fear from the people than the crown. While in communion with the Pope, his temporal supremacy was a constant subject of collision between the King of England and the clergy; and the monarchy was the only centralised power in the country capable of entertaining serious designs upon the Church. In the seventeenth century, when the King became the Head of the Church, it was parliament that was dangerous to the clergy. In the thirteenth, the barons were far too disunited, and far too devout, for anything to be apprehended from them. But if the Church was actuated by such motives as Mr. Knight imagines, why did she not protest against the Statute of Labourers, against the Vagrancy Laws, and those other alleged social iniquities which figure so prominently in Mr. Knight's pages? Again, of Simon de Montfort himself, either he was a type of his order, or he was not. If he was, how does Mr. Knight reconcile the enthusiasm he is said to have inspired with the character which he elsewhere draws of that order? If he was not, his private virtues do not affect the language employed by Hume in speaking of the insurrec-

tion. For ourselves, we have no doubt that, whatever might have been the true disposition and intentions of "the great earl" himself, the cause in which he fought was practically the cause of the feudal oligarchy, *versus* the power of the crown, and represented a contest which, at that time, was being waged all over Europe. That oligarchy did great things for us. They planted a noble tree of liberty, which, though intended to shelter but themselves, has produced a forest from its acorns. They created the English gentleman, and taught the commonalty to love him. In a word, they made "the privileged classes" popular, a feat accomplished nowhere but in England, and which is, in fact, the secret of our long political stability. But we must not allow these merits, great as they are, to blind us to the fact that, through all those centuries of turbulence, the crown, after all, is the power to which our sympathy is due. Much as we owe to the exertions of the feudal nobility, we owe still more to that splendid line of princes whose vigorous hands forced the discordant elements of society into their proper places; compelled obedience to law, and respect for right; grappled boldly with the great ecclesiastical dominion, and, after a deadly conflict, reduced it to due subordination; and, by these means alone, rendered possible the great constitutional labours of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Had the nobility triumphed over the crown in the fourteenth century, England would have sunk into the condition of Poland; as, if the crown had triumphed over the aristocracy in the seventeenth century, she would have remained at about the level of Sardinia.*

* Written in 1859.

But "Popular History" runs away with the idea that all resistance to power of any kind is praiseworthy; that the clergy were praiseworthy for resisting the king, and the king for resisting the clergy; that the barons were patriotic for defying the crown, and the people for defying the barons; and so on, in a never-ending circle of enlightened absurdity. Of course, we know well enough that one party would not be uniformly in the right as to particulars: that resistance of either by the other might, in special cases, be justifiable. But what, we have to ask, was the principle underlying the conflict from the beginning to the end? This is the question which Hume had asked himself, and his answer to which has exposed him to Mr. Knight's abuse, as "a supporter of kings and hater of priests." He saw in the struggle between the king and the barons, and between the clergy and the king, under every guise, and in every alliance, the effort of the young and rising "State" to emerge from the anarchy of a feudal confederation, and the ever-recurring struggle of the civil power to assert its authority against the pretensions of the spiritual. Although circumstances might at times so alter the position of the conflicting forces as to give a momentary appearance of right to the side which was habitually in the wrong, Hume did not allow his judgment to be obscured, or even his language to be materially modified, by these exceptional phases of the contest; and he resolved that those who wrestled for the assertion of these important principles should not lack their due meed of praise. Whatever may be Hume's shortcomings, we sincerely trust that the spirit by which his history of this epoch is pervaded may never cease to be the

predominant one in this island, and that the popularity of such historians as measure their chances of success, like the author of a melodrama, by the number of crimes they can introduce, may long exist in name only, and never extend to the reality.

A point upon which Mr. Knight is, as might be expected, contemptuously positive, is the hereditary right of the English sovereigns. As affecting a principle which more than any other contributed to that victory of right over might to which we have already alluded, this statement calls for some examination. There are two principal occasions in English history by which this principle is usually tested—namely, the accession of Henry VII. and James I. But it will be useful to begin a little higher up the stream. After noticing the rise of the study of the law as a separate profession in the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the establishment of a regular legal system by "the great work of Bracton," at the end of Henry III.'s reign, Mr. Hallam proceeds to point out how the succession to the crown came, naturally and beneficially, to be settled according to the principles of law. And, no doubt, as civilisation, habits of settled industry, and domestic comfort began to make head against the exclusively warlike propensities of a barbarous era, men would turn with favour towards any system which seemed to guarantee them an immunity from the disorders of a contested succession. In addition to the calamities which had befallen their own country during the three previous centuries for want of a fixed law of inheritance, the subjects of Edward I. had before their eyes the warning example of Scotland. And

they might not improbably have traced some resemblance between the circumstances which had paved the way for her subjugation to England, and those which had laid England prostrate before the lances of Normandy. At all events, it is a curious coincidence, if nothing more, that the first English sovereign, in whose person the application of the principle of primogeniture to the regal office was fully acknowledged, should have been Edward II.; and this circumstance may fairly be taken as the sign of a resolve, on the part of the English nation, that, in this country at least, the question of the succession should in future require no arbitrator. We find, accordingly, that in the proclamation of Edward II., the words which had hitherto formed part of the formula, implying the existence of a veto on the part of the nobility, were, for the first time, omitted, and Edward declared king, *jure hæreditario*, alone. Now, let us hear how Mr. Knight describes this event. "No doubt the ancient forms of election were gone through. On the death of Edward I., his eldest son, Edward II., succeeded," as Walsingham records, "not only by hereditary right, but by the unanimous assent of the nobles and great men." Upon reference to Hallam ("Middle Ages," ii. 195), we discover that this, indeed, is the language in which the annalist has himself recorded the transaction, but that, as we have said, the words were not really used in the proclamation. As a popular narrative is presumably intended for those persons who are not likely to read any other, so important a point in enabling them to trace the character of the English monarchy should have been ascertained, we think, with rather more care. Again, in alluding to the

Act of Parliament which settled the crown upon Henry VII., Mr. Knight observes, "Parliament would not accept the vain pretension of an hereditary title." Here, we are aware, Mr. Knight has two considerable authorities on his side, namely, Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Hallam. But we think that both these writers have been partially led astray by the circumstances of the period in which they wrote, and have laid too much stress upon the fact that Parliament would not allow that sovereign to usurp an hereditary claim which he did not possess, and too little on the fact that they settled the succession in future on the strictest hereditary basis. Surely these circumstances prove much more in favour of the doctrine of hereditary right than the repudiation of Henry's own pretensions proves against it. An admission of his claim would, as it seems to us, have been more like a proof of indifference than devotion to the principle at stake. They desired to make the crown hereditary in Henry's family, and what so easy a way of doing it as to have laid down that he succeeded to it himself by that title, had they not been scrupulous about the purity and indefeasibility of the principle? It is to be doubted, also, if Henry's extreme anxiety to obtain a recognition of his own hereditary claim can be accounted for in any other way than by supposing the idea to have already taken deep root in the public opinion of the age. So ardently did he desire this, that he made special application to the Pope to help him over the difficulty, and to make up for his own deficiencies by the unction of an infallible decree. Yet Henry was not a proud man. While if the wish sprung from mere sentiment, though Henry had as little sentiment,

in all probability, as a cod-fish, nothing but the antiquity of the practice could have created such a feeling. But the true explanation, we have no doubt, is that the people had now, for two hundred years, been accustomed to the principle, and that he felt he could not calculate on their allegiance without its authority.

Of the accession of James I., Mr. Knight merely says, that Parliament made a wise choice. But he was bound, not more as a candid, than as a "popular," historian, to have shown how strongly the circumstances of his accession testify to the recognition and acceptance by Englishmen of the hereditary principle. The acknowledgment of James I. was a direct repudiation of parliamentary title in favour of hereditary right. By the 35th Hen. VIII., that sovereign had been empowered to determine the succession of the crown, which he did by settling it, after the death of his own children, upon the descendants of his younger sister, Mary, instead of the descendants of his elder sister, Margaret. At the death of Queen Elizabeth, the former were represented by Lord Beauchamp, the son of the Earl of Hertford, and the latter by James VI. of Scotland. But the former title was passed over, and the claim of hereditary right, that is, of the heir-at-law, preferred to it. Hallam would endeavour to persuade us that the hereditary right of James had nothing to do with the allegiance proffered to him by the British legislature. It is difficult, however, to understand upon what grounds he bases this opinion. The conduct of Parliament was in exact conformity with the principle laid down at the accession of Henry VII. They had then declared the crown to be here-

ditary in the Tudor dynasty; and though they had obsequiously permitted Henry VIII. to infringe this rule of succession, yet, when his heavy hand was taken off them, it was only natural they should recur to the practice which was generally deemed the most salutary. The fact is, that we must not confound that exceptional interference with the lineal descent which special emergencies had rendered needful from the foundation of the monarchy, with the existence of a pretension to control the ordinary operation of the law. The principle of hereditary right only meant that the king was to succeed to his father according to the same principle which regulated the succession to private property. How this principle was established by the feudal lawyers, and confirmed by the opinion of society, to whose best interests it was conducive, we have already mentioned, on the authority of the great constitutional historian. But just as the king could resume a vassal's grant of land, should he be guilty of certain specified offences, so, of course, could the nation resume the king's, when convicted of analogous transgressions. But neither in the one nor the other could this liability to deprivation affect the principle of inheritance. A family might lose their estates for treason to the government of the day; but in the family to which they were regranted, the principle of primogeniture immediately took effect anew. And government never dreamed that, because they had a right to take a man's property away from him, they had, therefore, any right to interfere with the established law of succession to that property. Simple and almost superfluous as this statement may appear, it is only by keeping it steadily before their eyes that the people can acquire a correct estimate of what the English monarchy

really is. If the king were guilty of treason to his subjects —using the phrase simply as an illustration—his crown was confiscated* to the nation, who then re-granted it anew to another family. But it was to the family they granted it, and not to the individual; and, having once granted it, had no legal right to interfere with its lineal transmission. This is the true distinction, which writers like Mr. Knight fail to perceive, between the extravagant doctrine of divine right on the one hand, and the inadequate doctrine of a parliamentary title on the other. The right of the sovereign to the crown is divine only in the sense in which all human law, as the representative of God's law, is divine. And the right is parliamentary only, as, for instance, the Duke of Marlborough's title to Blenheim may be called parliamentary, because the estate was given him by Parliament, and could be taken away if he levied war on Queen Victoria.

It is to be observed, moreover, that arguments in favour of this or that constitutional theory, drawn from the practice of remote times, are frequently suggestive of others which are proportionably fatal to it. For instance, if it be said that no justification of Charles I.'s arbitrary exertions of power can be derived from the conduct of the Anglo-Norman and Plantagenet sovereigns, because in their time the theory of the constitution was unformed, as truly may it be said that neither can anything prejudicial to the doctrine of hereditary right, for the same reason, be deduced from them. And *vice versâ*, that if the procedures of those days are allowed to be declarative of the constitution in one

* The sanctity of the sovereign's person is a separate question.

thing, they must be allowed to be so in another. It might also be urged that the irregularities in the succession, prior to the reign of Henry VII., prove nothing against the doctrine of hereditary right. For that which is admitted in theory, will often, in rude and violent times, be set at nought in practice. That various sovereigns should have thought the sanction of Parliament a very useful supplement to the right which they deemed themselves to possess already, is not astonishing; while that they should have made use of it to establish claims* *not* founded on strict hereditary right, is as far from being an argument against the latter, as it is a presumption in favour of its having been the standing custom of the realm.

Mr. Knight's description of the great Stuart controversy will, of course, be readily divined by our readers, without requiring any long account of it from us. To do Mr. Knight justice, he seems at times to have been visited by some qualms of conscience at reproducing the ordinary popular conception of Charles I. He is thus sometimes tempted to make admissions which, if insisted upon by an opponent, would invalidate much of his condemnatory language. He admits, for instance, that the king's theory of government was a consistent one, and that his fault lay in not perceiving that the time for acting up to it had passed away. But if this was all, his execution, independently of other considerations, was obviously unmerited. What king living in a transitional epoch ever *did* see it? At the same time we sincerely believe this to be a very just epitome of Charles's character and situation. If Mr. Knight had worked out

* *Vide* Lord Bolingbroke's "Letters on History." Letter XX.

this view in his "Popular History," and had given his readers a careful and dispassionate account of those applications of prerogative to which Parliament objected, and of the precedents upon which the king himself imagined them to rest, he would have done a real service to his generation. Public opinion oscillates for a long time between the two extremes, before it settles down into the mean. Charles I. has suffered greatly from his eulogists: he has now been for some considerable period almost as unduly blackened, as he had once been unduly whitened. We may rest satisfied that he too at last will find his real level in history; and it would have been greatly to Mr. Knight's credit had he contributed, in howsoever small a degree, towards this consummation. The publication of this History, which we have treated throughout, it will be observed, as his own work, afforded an excellent opportunity for a statement of simple unvarnished facts upon this subject, which is much wanted. We do not accuse Mr. Knight of any want of research. Far from it. But he who enters upon documentary or other investigation without putting off his prepossessions, had better, in most instances, have spared himself the trouble. A man often deceives himself into the belief that in going over evidence for himself, instead of taking it from others, he is necessarily exercising his own judgment. Nothing can be more delusive, and Mr. Knight is certainly not one of the exceptions to the rule.

The fact is, that as regards this whole passage of English history, the people of this country have never had the king's case exhaustively, and at the same time popularly, laid before them. Lord Macaulay and Mr. Carlyle, from whom we suppose the vast majority of the non-studious

public have derived their views of this period, either directly or filtered through the pages of "Popular Historians," have both shown only one side of the shield, though they have held it up in different lights. Since the modern style of historical writing came into fashion, we have not had the other aspect of the question presented to us. It is silly to suppose that the people would be infected with any love of tyranny merely by finding out that Charles I. was less of a tyrant. It is more important just now to inculcate an affectionate reverence for our past history, and to place our kings and great men in as favourable a light as truth will admit of, than to propagate either the worship of force or the mysteries of Whiggism. Both are quite competent to take care of themselves. But between the hard mechanical action of military imperialism on the one hand, and the laborious and somewhat narrowing pursuit of commerce on the other, some of the finer and gentler qualities of human nature are in danger of being trodden out; and now that all the salient points of English history are established beyond controversy—now that the reformation is complete, the old school of writers extinct, and the superstitions of divine right and passive obedience as obsolete as the mass, should we not be doing well to preserve whatever of beauty or nobility the ancient idea may represent? Do not all Englishmen rejoice that when the idols were swept out of our churches, and the idolatry from our prayer-books, the work of demolition was stayed, and our grand old cathedrals and beautiful liturgy still left to us? And will not our posterity have just reasons to complain if, in our zeal against "slavish tenets" and "arbitrary power," we proceed to the extremities of a Knox or a Peters; and, together with the

objectionable doctrines, root out for ever the loyalty, the generosity, and the chivalry by which they were supported? The fact is, the part which the doctrine of loyalty has played in the history of Europe is seldom thoroughly understood. When the feudal organisation was broken up, and a dissolution of old ties was everywhere in progress, the world required some substitute equally effective for maintaining the cohesion of society and ennobling obedience to law. What chivalry had done under the old régime loyalty was to do under the new. It was this sentiment which softened the relations between rulers and ruled, and prevented the vigorous authority, which it was for the interests of society that somebody should then wield, from being hardened into mere brutal despotism. These considerations are eminently proper in an essay upon "Popular History." The people of this country are not likely to forget by what steps their liberties were acquired. They have been told quite often enough of the grandeur of resistance. What they now want to learn is something of the grandeur of obedience. They do not require to be informed that our institutions and our rulers are bloated. They are already familiar with the spectacle. The poor have Mr. Bright preached unto them. But though his gospel is a gospel of peace, it is certainly not one of good will; and this, under another shape, is exactly the element we desiderate in books written for the instruction of the people. More charitable and large-minded views of men and events are what we want in the present day. We want to smooth down the animosities of past eras; to have clearly pointed out that the large majority of public men in this country have been actuated by a sense of duty as well as by other

motives. We want to have it clearly shown that power is not always selfish, and resistance not always disinterested. These are the lessons which a popular historian in 1859 should have striven to elicit from our annals, and not have contented himself with travelling over the old beaten track; with telling us that Simon de Montfort was a patriot, that Henry VIII. was a robber, that Charles I. was a tyrant, that Charles II. was a swindler, and that James II. was a bigot.

The nearer we approach to our own time, the less necessity is there for criticising Mr. Knight in detail. From the Revolution downwards, he adopts those views of which Lord Macaulay is the popular representative, and which, as far as they are untrue, have already been sufficiently exposed. Mr. Knight would, in our opinion, have acted more wisely, and certainly more in accordance with the spirit of his own preface, had he contented himself with a luminous and exhaustive recital of facts, and abstained from adding his own comments to the narrative. To persons acquainted with history, the theories in question are decidedly weakened by the repetition, while those who gain their first knowledge of this period from Mr. Knight's pages will assuredly be still left in ignorance of many most important considerations. On the massacre of Glencoe, for instance, he supposes that William might have signed the warrant for the "extirpation" of the Macdonalds, without understanding the word to mean more than their removal. But William must have known well enough that such "removal" was practically impossible. Where were they to be removed to? William was not a child, and those who choose to defend his heart at the expense of his head are welcome to

their argument, but are not likely to find many disciples. Lord Macaulay has too much sense to rely upon a plea of this kind. He prefers us to believe, what, indeed, is possible enough, that William signed the warrant which was despatched into Scotland without making himself master of its contents, or, indeed, without reading it at all. To what extent this is really an exculpation of William, our readers must judge for themselves. Mr. Knight does not think much of it, but our own opinion is, that it really expresses all that *can* be said in William's favour. Mr. Knight's attempt to fasten the whole guilt of this atrocity upon the Master of Stair is deficient in this respect, that he takes no notice of the strong motive which the Scottish Whigs had for bringing Dalrymple into odium, namely, his attachment to Episcopacy, for the abasement of which no means were, in their eyes, unjustifiable. On the subject of the Partition Treaties, again, Mr. Knight errs in the other extreme, for William's conduct in relation to these famous transactions was truly statesmanlike, and admits of being very briefly and clearly explained to the popular apprehension. Lord Bolingbroke, who opposed it strongly at the time, afterwards confessed that he had been mistaken, and pointed out that, both in this as in most other parts of his foreign policy, William displayed the utmost wisdom and strength of mind. The dismissal of William's Dutch Guards, furnishes Mr. Knight with a fresh opportunity of inveighing against the ingratitude and folly of our ancestors. This is, perhaps, one of the weakest passages in the fifth volume. Mr. Knight totally forgets that one of the popular grievances under the last two Stuarts had been that nucleus of a standing army which was constituted by the regiments

of Guards. A body of men which we had viewed with great uneasiness under an English sovereign, even when composed of Englishmen, we were not likely to tolerate under a Dutch sovereign when composed of Dutchmen. It was not to be supposed that a prince, whose only title to our regard was that he had come to redress our grievances, should be allowed to perpetuate one of the most important of them all; and one, moreover, which daily reminded us that we were indebted to a foreigner for our liberties.

In his views of foreign policy, Mr. Knight shows little breadth of grasp and but meagre acquaintance with facts. From the Peace of the Pyrenees to the Treaty of Vienna, the only occasion on which this country exercised much real influence upon the settlement of Europe was in the famous Treaty of Utrecht; yet his account of the negotiations which preceded this important transaction is next to worthless, while as to the motives which induced the Government of Queen Anne to bring the war to a conclusion, one would imagine that Mr. Knight was ignorant that this is one of the *causes célèbres* of English history, which is still virtually undecided. He gives no evidence of having read Lord Bolingbroke's own version of these transactions, which was written twenty-three years after they took place, when he had retired from public life, and had little, if any, motive remaining for distorting facts. Even, however, if he had, no man can be entitled to write a history of these events who has not studied the singularly luminous and elaborate argument delivered by the principal actor in them. And we may add, while we are upon this subject, that if Mr. Knight had been aware of the merit of Bolingbroke's historical writings upon the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,

which are replete with philosophic and statesmanlike views, expressed with remarkable brevity and clearness, he would have added very greatly to the value of his own reflections upon those epochs.

Mr. Knight's summaries of our social progress, and his account of our commerce and manufactures at successive stages of our history, are, undeniably, very useful, are often very interesting, and are sometimes both eloquent and picturesque. Yet there is occasionally something approaching to the ludicrous in the unsuspicious solemnity with which he bows down before his idol. He is the Boswell of Birmingham, and is never visited by the faintest glimmering of doubt in the divinity of clay and iron. Here, for instance, is a passage embodying many of his best and some of his most amusing points:

Bishop Berkeley in 1737, by way of example to the Irish of the rapid turning of money, asks, "Whether the small town of Birmingham alone doth not, upon an average, circulate every week, one way or other, to the value of fifty thousand pounds?" The iron-ware of Birmingham was in repute long before the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the time of Henry VIII. Leland wrote, that "a great part of the town is maintained by smiths, who have their iron and sea-coal out of Staffordshire." The people of Birmingham were then makers of knives, of bridle-bits, of nails. In the reign of Charles II. they still manufactured scarcely anything more than iron tools and husbandry implements. Their forges were open to the public streets, by the side of the rough shop where the spade and the bag of nails were exposed for sale. Under the encouragement given by William III., Birmingham began in his reign to make fire-arms. But how insufficient at that period was the home production of iron articles we may judge from the table of duties on imports, in which we have iron pots, backs for chimneys, frying-pans, anvils. The vast surface of the great coal and iron field around Birmingham was then scarcely penetrated. The blaze of the furnaces that now lights up the country for miles was then a very feeble illumi-

nation from the few works where iron was melted by wood. The anvils of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall, Bilston, Wednesbury, were then employed in the humblest work of iron manufacture. Birmingham before the middle of the eighteenth century had attempted no manufactures in brass; and the greater part of that wonderful variety of industry which has given Berkeley's "small town" a population of a quarter of a million of souls was quite unattempted. The great prosperity of Birmingham belongs even to a much later period than that in which Burke called it "the toy-shop of Europe." It was always employed at work more important than toy-making. It supplied England and its settlements with many articles of convenience and utility, before it became famous through the world for those manifold products of ingenuity and taste which no nation can rival. Every house that was newly built in England during the eighteenth century gave a stimulus to the activity of Birmingham to provide its locks and bolts. Every acre of ground that was cleared for building in the American plantations made a similar demand upon the labour of the iron-working district. The Sheffield axe hewed down the woods. The Birmingham spade trenched the ground, and the thorns crackled under the Birmingham caldron. Slowly but certainly did the exports increase of those articles which we imported at the beginning of this eighteenth century, until, in 1850, the exports of hardware alone amounted to three millions seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling.

Goodness gracious me—you don't say so!

We fancy Mr. Knight gasping for breath when he came to the end of this paragraph, and expecting his readers to repeat the last few words almost in a whisper, as expressing something awful and religious. Again:

What a contrast is the conveyance of iron from the mouth of the Wye in those days, and from the mouth of the Taff in our day. The furnaces of South Wales produce as much pig-iron in one week as all the furnaces of England produced in the whole year of 1740. The seventeen thousand tons, smelted by charcoal in that year, are only the hundred and fortieth part of all the iron produced in the United Kingdom in 1851, and only the two hundredth part of the produce of 1857. The iron of 1851, compared with the population, was estimated at a hundred and sixty-eight pounds (1½ cwt.) per head. The iron of 1740

gave less than seven pounds per head. The iron-workers of Merthyr-Tydvil are greater now in number than the whole population of Glamorganshire at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

When some fifty of these paragraphs follow one another without a break, an effect is produced which one or two brief extracts are quite insufficient to explain. But, perhaps, the most diverting instance of this spirit, though *à propos* of a comparatively insignificant subject, is contained in the following:

The salmon taken in the Derwent were carried fresh to London by horses, which travelled day and night without intermission. They travelled faster than the post, and the extraordinary price of the luxury—from half-a-crown to four shillings a pound—repaid the cost of carriage. Railways serve London with salmon at a cheaper rate.

The taunt expressed in the concluding sentence of this extract is perfect. We are as grateful as any men of well-regulated minds and sound digestions ought to be for the benefit conferred on us by the railways; yet Mr. Knight has evidently forgotten a circumstance of some little importance to the piscivorous public in estimating our comparative advantages. The same progress of civilisation which gave us railways to convey our salmon has left us but very few salmon to put into our railways.* We don't mean to find much serious fault with Mr. Knight for this simple and honest adoration of material good. He is like one who takes his child into a banker's strong room to see the sovereigns tossed about with a shovel. And we can fancy him regarding those poor devils, our ancestors, with the same kind of pity that a kind-hearted alderman would feel for the man who had never tasted green fat. The pity

* Written in 1859.

is perfectly sincere, but coupled still with a vague kind of notion that, after all, such a man must be more or less a villain, or he would have had green fat. But, as we have said, this view, though not confirmed by an extended view of human nature, is not criminal; and, on the whole, we can shake hands with Mr. Knight over this department of his History in perfect good humour.

We can say nearly as much of his description of English society during the first half of the eighteenth century, but not quite. Of the country gentry he remarks, in allusion to Sir Roger de Coverley:

> This, it may be said, is the fancy-picture of the most gentle of the great English humorists. But all the life-like traits of past manners must be derived from similar sources. Those who describe their own age with the greatest bitterness of satire are not always the most trustworthy. The exceptional cases of gross vice and degrading ignorance in the gentry may be as often mistaken as characteristics of a class, as the ruffians and outcasts of a great city may be mistaken for specimens of the hard-working and ill-paid tenants of its hovels and garrets.

This is candid and sagacious, and we might add that the character of Squire Alworthy was drawn by a Whig, as well as the character of Sir Roger. Nor ought it to be altogether forgotten that all party portraits of a class naturally take their hues from the vices and virtues most prevalent at the time when they were taken, and that the drunkenness and debauchery of the country gentlemen which figure in the caricatures of Queen Anne's reign are no more to be accepted literally than the portraits of Protectionists and game preservers which adorn our own Sunday journals. Lord Macaulay's mistake is that he *has* accepted them literally, and to this extent Mr. Knight

very judiciously differs from him. Elsewhere, however, the old element again crops up. Of the nobility, Mr. Knight says:

> Perhaps, all things considered, they were then, as a body, the most incapable of taking a large view of the destinies of their country, and of nourishing a deep sympathy with the condition of the people. But nevertheless they could not segregate themselves from the people. They could not repose in safety upon exclusive pretensions; and thus they headed the Revolution, and imparted to it the somewhat aristocratic character which it has taken more than another century to repair.

Now, if the country gentlemen, as politicians, were what Mr. Knight believes them to have been; if the trading community had not yet, as a rule, become educated men; if the Church were Erastian, and the crown a nonentity, pray where was the class which saved the country from destruction, if the nobility were even more incapable than these? The possibility of this assertion being true, is negatived by all that goes before, and by all that comes after it. And the assertion itself is another good specimen of that confusion of thought to which we have before adverted as characteristic of Mr. Knight's narrative. As for the nobility being driven to support the Revolution because of the people—why, it is very well known that when the first burst of indignation against James was over, the people at large reverted to their original attachment to the House of Stuart; so much so, that in 1717 the Whigs were obliged to pass the Septennial Act, through fear that a Parliament elected at that time would have declared for the Chevalier. So far, then, from the nobility having been influenced by the people, it was in spite of the people that revolution principles were esta-

blished. And those who believe in the value of those principles, among whom we number ourselves, ought, at least, to acknowledge the courage and resolution with which the Whigs stood to their colours, however large a mixture of the oligarchic spirit was contained in their zeal for King George.

"The Popular History of England," to which Mr. Charles Knight has given the authority of his name, is not, then, a work which can possibly supersede our standard histories as a text-book for young readers. So far we must express our conviction that the work is a failure. It belongs to a school of writers who, as we have said, start with a fundamentally untrue idea of national life—namely, that "the people," a term which they contract and expand at convenience, has for ever been fighting with some other class in the country, and wringing concessions from them one by one. Whereas we conceive the truer exposition of the history to be that a multiplicity of interests have all along been struggling with one another, gradually finding out the truth that the depression of their rivals did not in the end benefit themselves, but very slow to learn the lesson. Thus the land and the trading interest were for a long time hostile to each other. But, as we may see from Mr. Knight's own tables, it is only quite recently that a description of their contention as one between the aristocracy and the rest of the nation has obtained even the shred of plausibility which enables Mr. Bright to mislead his audiences. Similarly with religious interests. Was toleration either won or even desired by any body of the population deserving the title of the people? Let those

who recollect the tone and temper of the majority of Englishmen in 1828 answer this question. Did "the people" effect the Reformation? Did "the people" accomplish the Revolution? We have already pointed out the fallacy of this assumption, to say nothing of the frequent admission contained in this volume that "the people," in Mr. Knight's own sense of the word, gained nothing by it. No: regarded broadly, the nation has kept moving as a whole, sometimes one interest being predominant and sometimes another, but never, as we honestly believe, split in two, either consciously or unconsciously, as Mr. Knight and his genus would persuade us. If future crises are to be passed through by us with as much safety as former ones; if the increased intelligence of the people is not to result in a sort of cosmopolitan apathy; they must be taught to reverence their history, and to love and sympathise with the great men of all parties who contributed to make it. Such, we fear, will not be the result of that historical teaching which we have here been considering. And, consequently, in spite of its many merits of execution, and its vivid and useful social and commercial pictures, we cannot say we are other than sorry that it has been written.

THOMAS CARLYLE.*

We think it probable that many persons will lay down these volumes with the feeling that they would rather have had them written by a less ambitious writer. The persons and events of which they treat are too important to serve as raw material for the erection of any palace in the clouds, however gorgeous or sublime. They are persons and events of which it is extremely desirable—and especially at the present moment—that the world should form clear views undisturbed by prejudice or enthusiasm. But the remarkable diction in which Mr. Carlyle has chosen to array his thoughts is so much at variance with all our preconceived notions of literary propriety, that it alone is sufficient greatly to interfere with our just appreciation of his facts. This, however, is not the worst. A more serious defect arises from the unhappy circumstance, that Mr. Carlyle is out of harmony with his own age. He has no faith in system; and a high civilisation is made up of system. He feels towards the whole con-

* The Life of Frederick the Great. By Thomas Carlyle. In 4 vols. Vols. i. & ii. 1858. Vol. iii. 1862. London: Chapman and Hall.

gregation of modern ideas, much as the British peasant thirty years ago felt towards agricultural machinery. It was, he thought, taking the bread out of men's mouths. Similarly, in Mr. Carlyle's estimation, do modern political institutions take the bread out of the mouths of heroes. It is the old story of confounding causes with effects. The cause of husbandry is the production of food; one of its effects is to find employment for the husbandman. The cause of government is the civilisation of mankind; one of its effects is to produce heroes. But, in either case, to sacrifice the first to the second is only another shape of the multiform fallacy of protection; and, if we strip Mr. Carlyle's theory of the purple robes in which he disguises its true nature both from himself and others, it will resolve itself into the simple claim of "protection for heroes." The value of heroes is to be artificially kept up, by rigidly excluding all forms of government inimical to the development of personal supremacy. Holding these views, then, Mr. Carlyle is, we repeat, out of harmony with the present age. We have taught ourselves to believe that one test of national greatness is, the ability of the nation to dispense with the services of exceptional characters. It is good to have a Hercules; but it is still better not to have the Hydra. The general truth, of which the above is a particular instance, is only, after all, the common one, that we may pay too dear for our whistle. And the question which almost any sensible man will ask himself on considering some of Mr. Carlyle's paragons is this: Were their heroic qualities sufficient to redeem their brutal ones? If not, then the world paid too dear for them.

Of the century in which Frederick lived and worked, Mr. Carlyle writes:

One of the grand difficulties in a History of Friedrich is, all along, this same, That he lived in a Century which has no History, and can have little or none. A Century so opulent in accumulated falsities,—sad opulence descending on it by inheritance, always at compound interest, and always largely increased by fresh acquirement on such immensity of standing capital;—opulent in that bad way as never Century before was! Which had no longer the consciousness of being false, so false had it grown; and was so steeped in falsity, and impregnated with it to the very bone, that—in fact the measure of the thing was full, and a French Revolution had to end it. To maintain much veracity in such an element, especially for a king, was no doubt doubly remarkable. But now, how extricate the man from his Century? How show the man, who is a Reality worthy of being seen, and yet keep his Century, as a Hypocrisy worthy of being hidden and forgotten, in the due abeyance?

To resuscitate the Eighteenth Century, or call into men's view, beyond what is necessary, the poor and sordid personages and transactions of an epoch so related to us, can be no purpose of mine on this occasion. The Eighteenth Century, it is well known, does not figure to me as a lovely one; needing to be kept in mind, or spoken of unnecessarily. To me the Eighteenth Century has nothing grand in it, except that grand universal Suicide, named French Revolution, by which it terminated its otherwise most worthless existence with at least one worthy act;—setting fire to its own home and self; and going up in flames and volcanic explosions, in a truly memorable and important manner. A very fit termination, as I thankfully feel, for such a Century. Century spendthrift, fraudulent-bankrupt; gone at length utterly insolvent, without real *money* of performance in his pocket, and the shops declining to take hypocrisies and speciosities any farther:—what could the poor Century do, but at length admit, "Well, it is so. I am a swindler-century, and have long been; having learned the trick of it from my father and grandfather; knowing hardly any trade but that in false bills, which I thought foolishly might last for ever, and still bring at least beef and pudding to the favoured of mankind. And behold it ends; and I am a detected swindler, and have nothing even to eat. What remains but that I blow my brains out, and do at length

one true action?" Which the poor Century did; many thanks to it, in the circumstances.

There is an old saying, not without some degree of wisdom, that "happy is the people which has no history;" and certainly the life of the English nation, during the eighteenth century, must, in the generally received use of the word, have been a happier one than during any of the three which preceded it, when the country was torn to pieces by civil and religious strife. Hardly had the people begun to recover from the devastating wars of the Roses, when families were again rent asunder by the shock of the Reformation. And scarcely had some sort of order and tranquillity begun to emerge from that social and religious chaos, than discord was kindled afresh by the collision between progress and prerogative. Throughout this long and stormy period, the English people had conducted themselves nobly; and now, with the national character formed, and the national liberties both religious and political secured, they were about to reap their reward in a hundred years of tranquillity. It is quite true, therefore, that this century was, in England at least, marked by none of those grand moral and political agitations which demand heroes and martyrs to control them,

—"et numerum divorum altaribus addunt;"

and that to one who regards the existence of such movements as the only excellence of humanity, the eighteenth century may appear to have been apathetic and lethargic. Most erroneously in our opinion. For surely that such turbulence, however provocative of great qualities, is the final cause of national life, is a conclusion very difficult to

stomach. Nor can we readily believe that a Luther or a Hampden would have laboured as they did, unsustained by faith in some further end to be achieved by their exertions. Yet, when that end is achieved, we see no more Luthers and Hampdens; and then, according to Mr. Carlyle, the world passes through an era which is sordid, swindling, and bankrupt. Mr. Carlyle, moreover, as it seems to us, entirely overlooks the enormous social and scientific progress of the eighteenth century; a progress so marvellous as to have entirely changed the face of the country, and the manners of three-fourths of the population. Between the north country gentlemen who turned out with Lord Derwentwater in 1715, and their ancestors, who, a hundred and seventy years before, came flocking to the Pilgrimage of Grace, there was really no substantial difference. Their ideas, their mode of life, their relations to all around them, the very country which they gazed upon, and even the very dress which they wore, had changed but little. Could Robert Aske have suddenly returned to life, he and Sir John Forster would have no difficulty in understanding each other. But the England of high-roads and canals, of coaches and carriages, which had abjured the practice of wearing arms and of travelling upon horseback, which had substituted a standing army for regiments of grooms and gamekeepers, which had already a popular press, and which talked about Franklin and Herschel; would have seemed stranger to a gentleman of our Augustan age than it would have done to an ancient Roman. Of course, if Mr. Carlyle is prepared to deny that this transformation was for good—*cadit quæstio.* There are, no doubt, certain virtues in savage

life which civilisation destroys; and people have been found to maintain that the latter gives us no equivalent. But when the question is reduced thus far, it may be fairly said to have been argued out; and that its decision must be left to the judicial common-sense of the majority.

We have hitherto spoken of this country alone. But surely the same forces were in action both in France and Germany. They had produced less external change than they had in this country; for the simple reason that there religious and political struggles had terminated less favourably. The crust of society was in consequence less broken. The ploughshare of progress had not been driven over the domain of feudalism. But the change was spreading upwards till society was everywhere penetrated by a new spirit, a fact which alone rendered possible the universal success of the French Revolution. On the Continent the progress of government had lagged so far behind the progress of ideas, that a separation between the two had become almost inevitable. But the human mind had not been stagnant. Nor is the eighteenth century one of which, in our opinion, France need ever be ashamed, even when regarded only in its relation to progress. The first mistake, therefore, which we have to record against Mr. Carlyle is, that he allows all that silent but rapid amelioration which went on throughout the eighteenth century to go for nothing. That loving the glory, and knowing the utility, of the snows and hurricanes of winter, he looks with contempt on the noiseless operations of nature which succeed; on the loosening of the moist rich soil, and the unseen but universal quickening of vegetation.

In the next place we must observe that, although in dwelling so much upon the more unobtrusive merits of this maligned epoch, we may appear to be conceding to Mr. Carlyle that it *was* deficient in active heroism, it is by no means our intention to concede that much. Even according to the most rigid definition of a hero, it is difficult to refuse the title to either George Washington, or Warren Hastings, or Robert Clive, or General Wolfe, or Lally Tollendal, or John Howard. In Prussia, we have King Frederick; while, if we relax our severity but a little, many other names may at once be brought within the pale. The above were regular eighteenth-century men, whose work was all done in the days of the old *régime*. But it is not altogether fair to exclude those whose character was formed under its influences, though their deeds may have extended beyond it. The Duke of Wellington, Lord Nelson, and Lord Collingwood, are instances in point. And if an "insight into the veracities," an unswerving singleness of purpose and vigour of intellect, constitute a hero, then may we add to the number such men as Johnson, and Pitt, and Walter Scott.

But we must enter our protest against this abuse of the eighteenth century, on more grounds than our ability to produce certain men whom Mr. Carlyle is bound to respect. What, for instance, shall we say to the devotion of the Jacobite party to the house of Stuart? What of the aforesaid Lord Derwentwater? of the Highland chieftains, and the body of Scotch and English gentry, who ventured life and fortune on so desperate a stake from sheer, disinterested, conscientious loyalty? Was this a sham? Was

this hypocrisy? Did this prove the people, among whom such men could be found, to be insolvent in goodness? For it clearly is not the truth or falsehood of a man's opinions which Mr. Carlyle, more than any body else, identifies with the virtue or vice of his character. Self-sacrifice and conscientious firmness are admirable on both sides; and their presence amongst us during the first half of the eighteenth century, should be enough by themselves to rebut Mr. Carlyle's accusations. There is nothing perhaps on the continent of Europe analogous to this spectacle in England. But then this was pre-eminently England's great century; the period in which she—as first Spain and then France had been before her, and as Russia has become since—became the menacing power of Europe, and provoked combinations against her sway.

But if we pass on to the last article of Mr. Carlyle's indictment which it is our intention to notice, we shall find it as little applicable to the rest of Europe as to us. We mean that the eighteenth century was an age of shams. A sham, we suppose, may be understood as some public institution, practice, or idea, of which the utility or the truth has, to our knowledge, departed, such as was the man in brass at the Lord Mayor's show, or the Christianity of the British legislature. Now, if we look back to France in the eighteenth century, we are perplexed to discover any especial affluence of such mockeries. Had the popular hostility towards the Church really emanated from disbelief in its doctrines, that would have been a case in point; but it is more than doubtful whether it really did so. M. de Tocqueville, no impassioned advocate, expressly maintains

that it was solely against the aristocratic side of the ecclesiastical system that the rage of the people was directed. If, then, the doctrines of the Romish religion still retained their hold upon the masses of the people, the preachers of that religion were not members "of a sham." Was, then, the aristocracy a sham? Tried by the same test, it was certainly not. The aristocracy was still, not merely in theory but in fact, what it had ever been—the fighting order of the country. It is not, however, *enough* for an aristocracy to be merely a fighting body: they must be a governing body as well. And, accordingly, the co-existence of a feudal aristocracy and a bureaucratic monarchy has been found to lead inevitably to the degradation of the former. But, as long as they are an actual working element in the state, they cannot be considered a sham. To pass from the aristocracy to the monarchy. The latter was clearly so far from being a sham in France, that the French people, having twice tried, have twice found they could not do without it. And, from the particular monarchy of 1789, the utility was so far from having departed, that, according to the author already cited, all its forms were revived in the Empire. In fact, according to M. De Tocqueville, it is not going too far to say, paradoxical as it may seem, that the monarchy was the only thing which survived the Revolution. The aristocracy must have gone on dwindling whether the Revolution had come or not, and probably in time it would actually have sunk into a sham. But the descendants of the crusaders may be thankful that they were spared the degradation; and that, while their privileges continued, they maintained the superiority by which

they had originally won them. In Spain, no doubt, and in parts of Italy, aristocracy was at a lower ebb; but in Germany and Russia there was, as there still continues to be, plenty of life in it yet. While as regards the spirit of religion, whatever we have said of France, may be said *à fortiori* of Europe in general.

Of England in the eighteenth century we know many things that were wrong, but not many things that were "shams." Of the Church of England we may say what we did of the French Church, that whatever hostility was felt towards it was not felt towards its doctrines, as the case of Wesley can testify. The religion of the country was not, therefore, a sham; for the fashionable sceptics of St. James's-street concentrated all these views in their own persons, and left the bulk of the community untainted. In politics we are rather charmed by the reality, than disgusted by the hollowness, of the eighteenth century. Whig and Tory then meant something definite and intelligible. The monarchy was then real. George III. put an extinguisher on the one sham which had preceded him. Old Dr. Johnson was but the type of an immense majority of his countrymen: men with a firm belief in the National Church and the dignity of the Crown, and rejoicing to see it emancipated from the Revolution families. All this was real, hearty, and truthful: something for which men did and would risk large personal sacrifices. Nor, on the other hand, was the zeal of the opposition less sincere and daring. Many of them doubtless believed that the Revolution of 1688 was about to be nullified. They honestly held that religious disabilities should cease. They recognised

the existence of great abuses, as the Tories saw the existence of still greater dangers in an immediate effort to remove them. To say that men then lived in an age preeminently one of "shams," seems to us one of the most extraordinary inversions of fact on record; since ever so passing a glance at the religion and politics of the present day, both in England and in France, will suffice to show us what shams really are.

If Mr. Carlyle, however, had confined himself to abusing past generations, whatever we might have thought of his bad taste and inaccurate observation, he would still have been comparatively innocuous. Unfortunately he has not stopped there. Almost every other page before us bristles with a sneer at what Englishmen have been accustomed to consider the bulwarks of their national liberties—parliamentary government and a free press. We are only too well aware of the ease with which a reputation may be gained by affecting to deride both. We know that an admiration of that despotism which fishes with the bait of social equality is one of the new lights: that a contempt for newspapers has become fashionable among a very different class from either military dandies or official pedants: and that, by writing in support of them, we may expose ourselves to the charge of imbecility and vulgarity from those enlightened pioneers of progress, who revel in the apotheosis of ruffianism. That, however, we cannot help. On this particular occasion we certainly have no misgivings whatever about the justice of our own sentiments; nor are we without hope that the majority of our readers will sympathise in the annoyance we feel, that Mr. Carlyle should have lent even

the semblance of his support to that silly small fry, who fancy they are forcible when they affect to worship force.

But, independently of the perverseness of Mr. Carlyle's opinions upon these points, his mode of expressing them is unworthy of his position in literature:

> Editors vaguely account this man the "Creator of the Prussian Monarchy;" which has since grown so large in the world, and troublesome to the editorial mind in this and other countries. He was indeed the first who, in a highly public manner, notified its creation; announced to all men that it was, in very deed, created; standing on its feet there, and would go a great way, on the impulse it had got from him and others. As it has accordingly done; and may still keep doing, to lengths little dreamt of by the British editor in our time; whose prophesyings upon Prussia, and insights into Prussia, in its past, or present, or future, are truly as yet inconsiderable, in proportion to the noise he makes with them! The more is the pity for him, and for myself too.

Quorsum hæc? What have editors done to be visited with this crushing sarcasm? and why is the Prussian monarchy troublesome to the editorial mind? Not even Mr. Carlyle can be allowed to utter unintelligible sentences without being taken to task. We interrogate these words, and we can get absolutely no return; and we are therefore driven to conclude that they are introduced merely for the sake of the sneer which they contain—a conclusion which the tenour of subsequent passages will be found to amply support; *e.g.* of Frederick William the First:

> A just man, I say; and a valiant and veracious; but rugged as a wild bear; entirely inarticulate, as if dumb. No bursts of parliamentary eloquence in him, nor the least tendency that way. His talent for Stump Oratory may be reckoned the minimum conceivable, or practically noted as *zero*. A man who would not have risen in modern Political Circles; man unchoosable at hustings or in cacus; man for

ever invisible, and very unadmirable if seen, to the able editor and those who hang by him. In fact a kind of savage man, as we say, but highly interesting, if you can read dumb human worth: and of inexpressible profit to the Prussian nation.

Mr. Carlyle evidently sees something in the editorial mind which unfits it for the comprehension of human nature, whether in the unit or the aggregate, whether exhibited in biography or in history. Whether his vision play him false or not, is for the public to determine. But we presume they must have found out by this time what is for their own advantage in the matter; and that the editorial mind has a certain rude logic of its own, which, however, useless in the case of "inarticulate" humbugs, has been found available ere now in the case of talking ones. But to proceed to further illustrations:

Of Kalkstein, a rational, experienced, and earnest kind of man, though as yet but young, it is certain also that the little Fritz loved him; and furthermore that the Great Friedrich was grateful to him, and had a high esteem of his integrity and sense. "My master, Kalkstein," used to be his designation of him, when the name chanced to be mentioned in after-times. They continued together, with various passages of mutual history, for forty years afterwards, till Kalkstein's death. Kalkstein is at present twenty-eight, the youngest of the three tutors; then, and ever after, an altogether downright correct soldier and man. He is of Preussen, or Prussia Proper, this Kalkstein;—of the same kindred as that mutinous Kalkstein, whom we once heard of, who was "rolled in a carpet," and kidnapped out of Warsaw, in the Great Elector's time. Not a direct descendant of that beheaded Kalkstein's, but, as it were, his *nephew* so many times removed. Preussen is now far enough from mutiny; subdued, with all its Kalksteins, into a respectful silence, not lightly using the right even of petition, or submissive remonstrance, which it may still have. Nor, except on the score of parliamentary eloquence, and newspaper copyright, does it appear that Preussen has suffered by the change.

There can be no doubt of the *intention* with which sentences like these are penned. But it would be more becoming in Mr. Carlyle to confront the foe boldly, and write a treatise on the mischief wrought in this world by parliament and the printing-press. It is as useless as it is cowardly, to aim these underhand blows at two such "boiling unveracities," and "putrid fermentations of mud pools," as the institutions in question. "Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike," Mr. Carlyle moralises in the same strain whenever an opportunity offers; and, did not his own arguments defeat themselves, and lessen his influence daily, we might expect to see a society organised for the cow-hiding of editors, and an annual celebration of the day when Cromwell called the mace a bauble.

Again, of George I., after a most unfavourable picture of him, extracted from the memoirs of the Princess Wilhelmina, Mr. Carlyle writes: "This authentic glimpse, one of the few that are attainable of their first Constitutional King, let English readers make the most of."

Now why this emphasis on the word "Constitutional?" Why not their first Hanoverian King, or their first Guelph King, or their first German King, any one of which epithets would have been far more appropriate: unless the word is meant for a sarcasm? and, if it is, what good can possibly come out of it? Where is the benefit of imbuing the rising generation with a disrespect for that sober and manly form of government which is even now the envy of Europe? We cry shame on such designs. It is a great mistake to imagine this kind of tone to be the symptom of a strong nature. It may betoken a critical and curious in-

tellect; but it is essentially effeminate, and springs from that want of intellectual self-control, that craving for immediate "fruit," that for which, let us thank Heaven, is not a common English fault.

So much for the tone and temper displayed in these volumes on questions of politics and government. We are sorry to say that, in our opinion, Mr. Carlyle has erred as widely in his judgments of men and manners, as in his estimate of the public good. Frederick William the First is, as we have already pointed out, the prominent figure in the book down to its present stage. We shall now give a few specimens of this "invaluable" man's behaviour, as seen through Mr. Carlyle's spectacles.

The King's passion for "procerity" is well known to all the world now. His regiment of Potsdam Guards has been immortalised by Johnson's account of it. But here is a specimen of our just man's style of recruiting it, with his disciple's comment thereupon:

For example, in the town of Jülich there lived and worked a tall young carpenter: one day a well-dressed, positive-looking gentleman ('Baron von Hompesch,' the records name him) enters the shop; wants "a stout chest, with lock on it, for household purposes; must be of such and such dimensions, six feet six in length especially, and that is an indispensable point,—in fact it will be longer than yourself, I think, Herr Zimmermann: what is the cost; when can it be ready?" Cost, time, and the rest are settled. "A right stout chest, then; and see you don't forget the size; if too short it will be of no use to me: mind!"—"*Ja wohl! Gewiss!*" And the positive-looking, well-clad gentleman goes his ways. At the appointed day he reappears; the chest is ready;—we hope, an unexceptionable article? "Too short, as I dreaded!" says the positive gentleman. "Nay, your Honour," says the carpenter, "I am certain it is six feet six!" and takes out his foot-rule.—"Pshaw it was to be longer than yourself." "Well, it is."

—"No, it isn't!" The carpenter, to end the matter, gets into his chest; and will convince any and all mortals. No sooner is he in, rightly flat; than the positive gentleman, a Prussian recruiting-officer in disguise, slams down the lid upon him; locks it, whistles in three stout fellows, who pick up the chest, gravely walk through the streets with it; open it in a safe place; and find—horrible to relate—the poor carpenter dead; choked by want of air in this frightful middle-passage of his. Name of the town is given, Jülich as above; date not. And if the thing had been only a popular myth, is it not a significant one? But it is too true; the tall carpenter lay dead, and Hompesch got "imprisoned for life" by the business.

* * * * * *

Friedrich Wilhelm always answered, what was only superficially the fact, That *he* knew nothing of these violences, and acts of ill-neighbourship; he, a just King, was sorrier than any man to hear of them; and would give immediate order that they should end. But they always went on again, much the same; and never did end. I am sorry a just King, led astray by his hobby, answers thus what is only superficially the fact. But it seems he cannot help it: his hobby is too strong for him; regardless of curb and bridle in this instance. Let us pity a man of genius, mounted on so ungovernable a hobby; leaping the barriers, in spite of his best resolutions. Perhaps the poetic temperament is more liable to such morbid biases, influxes of imaginative crotchet, and mere folly that cannot be cured? Friedrich Wilhelm never would or could dismount from his hobby; but he rode him under much sorrow henceforth; under showers of anger and ridicule;—contumelious words and procedures, as it were *saxa et fæces*, battering round him, to a heavy extent; the rider a victim of Tragedy and Farce both at once.

Now we are perfectly willing to pity the man of genius, or to respect the man of veracity—Mr. Carlyle may take his choice—but we cannot do both at once. We cannot accept his portraiture of Frederick, quoted at p. 83 (*vide suprà*), if we admit the present excuse. No man's veracity is worth a straw which yields to the pressure of his particular temptation. The humour of the above anecdote prevents one feeling very angry with either the perpetrator or insti-

gator of the outrage. But still, if we reflect seriously upon it, we shall see that the worst abominations of the crimping system must have been tacitly sanctioned by this excellent and paternal prince.

But perhaps the most singular instance of the confusion between right and wrong into which Mr. Carlyle's enthusiasm has led him, is to be found in his description of the "Tobacco Parliament." Let us suppose, for instance, that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, finding life getting a little slow, should establish a quiet evening gathering of a few choice spirits, let us say my Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Bright, Mr. Bernal Osborne, and two or three more of the right sort, just to smoke a pound or two of mild cigars, and consume a few dozen of Bass's pale ale. Let us suppose, moreover, that their principal amusement was to get hold of some "famous literary gentleman," who believed himself a great deal wiser than every body else, and, after listening to his eccentricities for some time, to make him dead drunk, and play the same kind of practical jokes upon him for which our young ensigns and cornets did once enjoy an enviable notoriety. Let us suppose that, on leaving the palace, the intoxicated celebrity loses his way, and wanders towards the Regent's Park. That his tormentors, who of course are watching him, just shove him into the bear's den for a "lark," where he is "inhumanly hugged and squeezed," and that after this they hoist him up upon two ropes over the frozen canal, and drop him down with "his sitting part upon the ice," in which he breaks a big hole, and narrowly escapes drowning. Let us go on to suppose that the poor man at

length turns restive, and very naturally refuses to join in the royal festivities any more, and that then he is forced out of his own room "by crackers, rockets, and mal-odorous projectiles." Let us suppose that, "becoming human for a moment," he runs away and takes refuge with his relatives in Scotland, but that the gay, good-hearted circle, unable to spare their dear companion, take advantage of his poverty to lure him back again, and then maltreat him worse than ever. And that, by way of a climax, they invite another and bigger literary gentleman to come and quarrel with him, who first provokes him into hurling a hot smoking-pan at his enemy's head, and then, in retaliation, lays him across his knee, strips him, and smites the part exposed with the hot pan aforesaid. Let us suppose we were to see in the *Morning Advertiser* some morning, a column of large type headed, "Practical Joking at the Palace," and to find on perusal that Mr. Carlyle had been subjected to these various indignities, been swung on ropes, hugged by bears, and his *os coccygis* subjected to the extremes of cold and heat, accompanied by violence—what would be our feelings on the subject? Would our only remark be, that we had now gained some insight into the Prince's "views upon spiritual phosphorence, and stupidity grown vocal;" or should we express ourselves in short and simple Saxon on the matter? We leave the decision to our readers. Some may think one thing and some another. But we can assure them, that such feats were actually performed by that invaluable monarch, Frederick William I., and that his victim was a German professor of considerable learning and distinction.

Our readers must be pretty well prepared by this time to hear that Mr. Carlyle, in sporting language, "goes very straight." Like young Lochinvar, he stays not for brake, and he stops not for stone. A certain conception is to be supported, and no obstacles are allowed to impede the process. But after this once becomes clear, our interest in the book declines. When we have seen a man swallow a drawn sword once, we have seen it often enough. And Mr. Carlyle cannot avoid a certain sameness in his exhibition of an analogous performance. All the king's weaknesses, vices, and brutalities, are gulped down alike. Nothing comes amiss to him. And whether it is the murder of a gigantic carpenter, the bullying of a diminutive professor, or personal violence towards his own son and daughter, it is all the same. They are all smoothed-down by Mr. Carlyle's peculiar phraseology, and somehow masticated into virtues.

Mr. Carlyle's *method* is best described by his own description of a German History of the period: "Extremely extensive, mostly in the undigested, sometimes in the quite uncooked or raw condition."—p. 186. In Mr. Carlyle's case, be it remembered, this result is not the product of haste or carelessness, but of deliberate choice. He imagines himself to live among a nation of ὠμοφάγοι and tosses down his raw materials before us with a profound contempt for one of the highest attributes of civilisation. We have been given to understand that Mr. Carlyle never reads a newspaper or any other expedient of the literary taste of the public. The consequence is, that he is wholly unaware with what spluttering and grimacing his viands are usually received. It is probable, however, that he would hardly be

able to affect much change in his system now, even if he did find it out. Criticism, therefore, is chiefly useful for preventing the growth of imitation. And for that purpose we should be glad to see the question more frequently propounded than it is—what, namely, Mr. Carlyle supposes himself to gain by writing history on a principle which resembles burlesque? The introduction of fictitious characters, such as Smelfungus and Dryasdust, who are supposed to state the popular objections to Mr. Carlyle's views, and the perpetual interpolation of passages in smaller type, which are either extracts from journals of the time or else manufactured for the occasion by Mr. Carlyle himself, not only impart to his pages a strong flavour of buffoonery, but actually fail to impress us with any clear or permanent ideas. They interrupt instead of heightening the effect of an historical narrative. They distract, instead of concentrating our attention. And, finally, they are fatal to everything like dramatic effect, which depends upon the evolution of character in action, and is wholly spoiled by the running accompaniment of "talk" which Mr. Carlyle appends to it.

And this brings us to the great defect of his style as a distinct feature from his method. He writes biography like a showman. He stands in front of his heroes, as it were, with a long stick, pointing out their peculiarities with a grin, and describing their habits in the well-known phraseology of the van. His mere diction far outweighs in impertinence whatever it may win in power. When instead of saying that a sovereign involved himself in difficulties, Mr. Carlyle assures us that he "plunged into the muddy

unfathomable;" when instead of saying that a nation did not see its way in a particular contest, he says that this contest was productive of "somnambulisms innumerable;" we wonder what he perceives in the present age to make him fancy that such nonsense will be acceptable. But when he addresses himself to Frederick of Prussia, in the style and tone we have described, he becomes unbearable. Doubtless he himself believes that in using this eccentric language he is supporting some "eternal verity." But we can discover no deeper foundation for the practice than the extremely logical principle, that because much folly is written in the common manner, therefore that is necessarily wisdom which is written in a manner not common. So trite a criticism as this may seem unequal to the occasion; but, honestly, we can discover no newer one: more especially since extravagance of style is redeemed less than ever in these volumes by vigour or originality of thought. In a word, if Mr. Carlyle's absolutely monstrous phraseology has any real meaning, this is sinking deeper and deeper out of sight. We understand, of course, that it still bears the old vague meaning of a protest against conventionalities, conventional morals, conventional politics, and conventional manners. But the world gets tired of that. We have extracted from the protest all the fruit which it can yield; and if it turns out that Mr. Carlyle has only used the figure of Frederick the Great as a peg on which to hang his old clothes, without any express qualification for the work of a biographer, his genius will not save him from the common destiny of bores.

It is well to reflect at what a cost Mr. Carlyle is to be

indulged in these freaks. Not only the "dignity," but the beauty of history is endangered by his example. Literature is one of the fine arts, and history is a most important department of literature. How long, then, are we to tolerate an historian who discards "form" as un-essential, and arrays historical truth, not in that noble and refined garb which by common consent has been assigned to her, but in the flaunting patchwork of a harlequin? We urge that Mr. Carlyle is inflicting a permanent injury upon English literature by adherence to his present style, for which neither the truths that he has rescued from neglect, nor the beauty of occasional passages to be found scattered through his works, are an adequate compensation. In the younger writers of the day, the debasing effect of this example is constantly perceptible. Perhaps the commonest of all faults which we are called upon to criticise is the use of those authorial "asides" and apostrophes which deform the pages of almost every other biographical or historical work which issues from the press. Writers of considerable eminence—Mr. Motley, for example—are not exempt from this blot. And if the evil spreads, it will end in the total ruin of our good old classical standard of purity and elegance, and the establishment in its place of a style at once grotesque and florid; as on the stage spectacle and burlesque have almost extinguished the national drama.

The third volume embraces just about one-half of the war of the Austrian succession (1740—1748), and the chief historical fact which confronts us throughout is the disgraceful audacity with which, on the death of Charles VI., all the great Powers of Europe repudiated the solemn

pledges which had guaranteed his undivided dominions to Maria Theresa. During the five-and-twenty years which preceded the death of the last male heir of the Hapsburgs, more treaties than the historical student can remember were concluded among the different Courts, and in almost every one of them the "Pragmatic Sanction" was acknowledged by some one of the contracting parties. No sooner, however, was Charles dead, leaving only a woman on the throne, a bankrupt exchequer, and a mere skeleton of an army, than France suddenly discovered she had always reserved the rights of third parties; Spain asserted that Ferdinand VI., having succeeded to the Spanish dominions of the Hapsburgs, had become a Hapsburg himself, and was entitled, at least, to the Milanese; Poland had one pretext, Sardinia another; but all agreed in the common object of dismembering the Austrian dominions. England and Holland were the only Powers that stood aloof from this nefarious confederacy—the latter, it is said, rather against her will; England, as we know, fighting gallantly for the Empress-Queen, through seven not inglorious campaigns.

The Elector of Bavaria, who had withdrawn his signature to the Pragmatic Sanction, claimed the dominions of the Queen in virtue of a will made by Ferdinand I. in favour of his male descendants, which, as he contended, would override any subsequent arrangements. A copy of this will, worded as alleged, was to be seen at Munich. And the Elector now demanded leave to inspect the original, which was deposited at Vienna. To his horror there "stood in the cardinal passage, instead of *männliche* (male

"descendants), *eheliche* (lawfully-begotten descendants), "fatal to Karl Albert's claim! Nor could he *prove* that the "parchment had been scraped or altered, though he kept "trying and examining it for some days. He withdrew "thereupon, by order, straightway from Vienna; testifying "in dumb-show what he thought. 'It is your copy that is "false,' cried the Vienna people; 'it has been foisted on "you, with this wrong word in it: done by somebody (your "friend, the Excellency Herr von Hartmann, shall we "guess?), wishing to curry favour with ambitious foolish "persons!' Such was the Austrian story." Mr. Carlyle disbelieves the Austrian story, and says that the genuineness of the words in question is generally disbelieved in Germany. This story does not seem to have reached England in Smollett's time, nor is the supposition of forgery to be found in the History of Lord Mahon.

It was in the midst of this scene of confusion that Frederick II. made his entry on the European stage. Prussia too had signed the Pragmatic Sanction: but Frederick certainly had a more plausible reason for disregarding it than the other Powers. He alleged, and with as much justice as kings generally think sufficient, that Charles VI. had failed in an engagement with Prussia by which he was to cede to that monarchy the Duchies of Berg and Jülich. This breach of faith absolved him, he declared, from his own liabilities to Austria. 'But still if the young Queen would even now carry out the arrangement, she would find in him one of the firmest of her allies. Unhappily for Frederick's reputation, his first step was to march a Prussian force into Silesia, and his second only to

publish this statement of his wrongs. This feature of the transaction is wholly overlooked by his biographer; and is the one blot which rests upon his acquisition of Silesia. We do not blame him for seeking to extend his boundaries. We do not blame him for taking advantage of the bad faith or procrastination of the late Emperor, in order to effect this object, if he had done so fairly and legitimately. If, after having appealed to Maria Theresa without effect, he had chosen to indemnify himself by an acquisition three times as valuable as the Duchies originally claimed, little might have been said against his conduct; but he put himself completely in the wrong by violating the territory of an ally before his demands had been refused, and has left us no alternative but to believe that he was determined to provoke a war by an insult which could not be endured, before the opportunity was lost. This is the part played by Frederick in this volume. He invaded Silesia, won two pitched battles, and captured an important fortress,—successes which obtained for him the possession of Lower Silesia at the peace of Breslau in 1742. It is admitted that in these two battles Frederick did not shine much as a general. But the generals opposed to him shone still less, and the Austrian infantry was decidedly inferior to his own. Mr. Carlyle's description of these two battles is not so good as we should have expected. But with the aid of his plans they are quite distinct; and on comparing them with the versions of Sir Edward Cust we find they are correct. Notwithstanding the abysses of mud, the enchanted wiggeries, and the many somnambulisms which typify the condition of England at this period, we find that on the whole Mr.

Carlyle speaks well of us. The Spanish war of 1739, contrary to the opinions of Lord Macaulay and Lord Mahon, he holds to have been quite justifiable. He seems to consider that it was high time to put an end for ever to the "theory," still maintained by the Spaniards, of their universal sovereignty in certain regions. This was an "unveracity" which it was quite right and proper to destroy. But the more practical Whig essayist, looking only at the apparently petty character of the grievances alleged, and having no great objection to unveracities, thinks the cure was not worth the cost.

We have expressed our opinion very freely on Mr. Carlyle's errors. Of his merits it is superfluous to speak. None can now be ignorant of the vivid dramatic power and uncommon picturesqueness with which he places an action or a group before us: of the vein of natural humour that relieves the gravity of his style: of his real kindliness of heart when not mounted on his hobby: of his pathos, his purity; and his bold and free range of thought. He has a giant's strength: it is only to be regretted that he too frequently uses it with the wild energy of a giant.

BOLINGBROKE AS A STATESMAN.[1]

We have often lamented, that in the gallery of political portraits bequeathed to us by the late Lord Macaulay, we should have to seek in vain for the figures of Bolingbroke and Burke. It was, of course, impossible to write as much as Lord Macaulay wrote upon the politics of the eighteenth century, without any reference whatever to two of its most famous men. Of Burke, indeed, we may say that we can tell with considerable exactness what his lordship's estimate would have been; but we can only conjecture very vaguely in what hues he would have painted Bolingbroke. He called him a brilliant knave; but he upheld the Treaty of Utrecht. These are almost the only two decisive expressions of opinion on the character and career of St. John which his lordship has recorded; yet a finer subject for his pencil is scarcely to be found in the whole range of English history. We are not, indeed, so weak as to imagine that

[1] *The Life of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, Secretary of State in the Reign of Queen Anne.* By Thomas Macknight. London, Chapman and Hall.

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he would have given us a faithful likeness; but he could hardly have failed to produce a splendid and imposing picture. It would, doubtless, have exhibited his usual defects and infirmities; but it would probably have dispelled a good many vulgar errors which have clustered round the name of Bolingbroke. His Whig prepossessions would never have allowed him to be impartial; but his strong common sense would have saved him from becoming sentimental. If St. John was not a patriot such as Russell, Lord Macaulay would equally have seen that he was not a traitor such as Babington.

There is much in the conduct of Lord Bolingbroke which, if not exactly inexcusable, is, at all events, highly undesirable. But his history, up to the present time, has been written by his enemies: his own explanations of particular parts of his policy have been slurred over; designs have been imputed to him as criminal, without due consideration of the national feeling at the time; and but little allowance has been made for the uncertainty and novelty in which, during the first half of the eighteenth century, constitutional government was enveloped. None of his critics or biographers have sufficiently weighed these circumstances; neither Mr. Cooke nor Mr. Macknight, nor Lord Brougham, nor Mr. Croker. Nor could it be expected that a foreigner should supply omissions which have been perpetuated by English writers. In his excellent and interesting essay upon Bolingbroke and his times, M. Remusat, of whom Mr. Macknight seems not to have heard, adopts literally and unsuspectingly the conventional estimate of his character. A little reflection, however, may end in

persuading us that Lord Bolingbroke was not quite so bad as he has seemed; and that, though it was perhaps fortunate for England that she had a George the Second instead of a Patriot King, much may be forgiven to a writer in the middle of that prince's reign who was unable to discern this truth.

In describing Lord Bolingbroke's descent, Mr. Macknight informs us that the French nobility were accustomed to smile among themselves at his claim to illustrious lineage. If so, it is probable that very many of them smiled at a much better man than themselves. Both on the mother's and the father's side Bolingbroke's pedigree was brilliant. On the one, he was descended from the great family of D'Eu, or Dewias, which held immense domains in Normandy before the Conquest, while, ere it united with the St. Johns, the stream had been enriched by intermarriage with the Grandisons and Beauchamps. His paternal ancestry united in itself the blood of the ancient and powerful baronial families of De Port and St. John, the head of which at the period of the Norman invasion held a high command in William's army. The later alliances of the family had constantly brought fresh accessions of noble blood into its veins; so that, whatever esteem we may place upon a splendid ancestry, it is impossible to deny that Bolingbroke was entitled to it all.

Henry St. John was born in the Manor House of Battersea, in the month of October, and, according to the best evidence, in the year 1678. During his early boyhood he seems to have been educated with some strictness. His grandmother was the daughter of Oliver St. John, the

friend and Chief Justice of Cromwell; and doubtless the household at Battersea may have been conducted on principles somewhat at variance with the fashionable tone of the period. However, as the prejudices of his family did not prevent him from being sent to Eton and to Christchurch, we may fairly presume that he was not very tightly curbed at home, and that the worst of his reminiscences was that of Dr. Manton's commentary on the 119th Psalm, "which comprised a sermon upon every verse."

On leaving college, St. John plunged at once into all the pleasures of that graceless generation. His verses to an orange-girl, whom he could not persuade to be faithful to him, are still preserved; and he delighted to be seen in the Park alongside of Miss Gumly, the fashionable frail one of the day. To the same period we are to refer his intimacy with Dryden, and that celebrated interview in which, at the poet's request, he sat out old Jacob Tonson, who had come to bully him for copy. He was, therefore, the reader will observe, even at this early age a man of literature as well as a man of pleasure. Some time in the year 1700 he married the daughter of Sir Henry Winchecombe, a rich country gentleman of Berkshire, whose property was afterwards of great service to him. In January of the same year he had been elected member for Wotton Bassett; and, being little more than twenty-one years of age, joined of course the party of his Wiltshire friends, in other words, the "country party." That he was led into a policy by them of which his later judgment disapproved, he allows with perfect candour. He voted against the Partition Treaty, which he afterwards in his writings vindicated as

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the only possible resource left to Europe after the failure of the League of Augsburg. He supported, a few years later, the bill against Occasional Conformity; though, as he voted against it in the following session, a fact which Mr. Macknight has omitted to record, he cannot be supposed to have been very zealous in the cause. In 1711 indeed, when the bill was revived in a less stringent form by so moderate a man as Lord Nottingham, he again voted in its favour. But he finally expressed his opinion upon all measures of this nature as follows: "Far from desiring to impose any new hardships upon them (Dissenters), even those who have been reputed their enemies, and who have acted as such on several occasions, acknowledge their error. Experience hath removed prejudice. They see that indulgence hath done what severity never could."

It was during these earlier years of his parliamentary career that St. John formed that intimate acquaintance with another well-known English statesman, which exercised so great an influence on his fortunes, and to which he afterwards referred his own downfal. This was Robert Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, the descendant of a knightly family which had been long settled in Radnorshire, Glamorganshire, and Herefordshire. He was educated at a private school, afterwards at Jesus College, Oxford, and then entered at Lincoln's Inn. He practised at the Bar for some time, and what caused him to exchange his profession for politics we are not informed; but in the latter part of William's reign he was returned to Parliament for his native town of Radnor; and in the last Parliament of that sovereign he was elected Speaker. His con-

nexions, as indeed did some of Bolingbroke's, belonged to the Whig and Nonconformist interest; and his private life was always modelled according to the strictest sect. But he early began to attach himself to the Tory side, and among the young men who adopted him as a kind of leader was the new member for Wotton Bassett. They soon became fast friends; and as the Tory interest gradually prevailed in the House of Commons, both together took office under Godolphin. This was in the year 1704; and for the three following years Harley was Secretary of State, and St. John Secretary at War. It was during this period, the reader must remember, that Marlborough gained his earliest victories; and it is not denied that a part of his success was due to St. John's excellent administration of the war department. But neither Harley, it seems, nor his lieutenant were contented to remain for ever under the authority of Godolphin. They aspired to form a party of their own; and St. John, at least, who had entered Parliament as a Tory, could not have been satisfied with a position which connected him so closely with the Whigs. Harley then commenced, through the medium of Mrs. Masham, the Queen's new favourite, to ingratiate himself at court, and to form an interest there, unknown and independent of his colleagues. The favour of the court at that time would at once give any man a great number of votes in Parliament; and such, indeed, was the recognised path to power among the statesmen of the day. This scheme, however, was detected by Marlborough and Godolphin, who forced the Queen to dismiss Harley from his

post. St. John thought proper to retire in company with his friend, though whether or no he was privy to his intrigues remains a very doubtful question. He always maintained that this step was taken on wholly independent grounds; and to the explanation of his conduct which he always gave, when taxed with ingratitude towards Godolphin and Marlborough, we shall presently advert.

With Bolingbroke's resignation in 1707, we complete what may be termed the introductory chapter of his life. When he again reappears upon the scene of politics, it will be as inaugurating the first of the three great epochs into which his career may be divided. These are, his administration of the Foreign Office from 1710 to 1714, his engagement at the court of St. Germains, and his opposition at home to the Government of Sir Robert Walpole. During the three years which followed his resignation, he resided chiefly at a place belonging to his wife's father at Bucklersbury, in Berkshire; and here he seems to have divided his time pretty evenly between reading and fox-hunting. It was now, we may suppose, that he made up for the idleness of his school and college days, and acquired that intimate acquaintance with the history and literature of Rome which is visible in all his works. He himself always spoke of this period as the happiest of his life; and he affected, even at that early age, the airs of the philosopher in retirement. There was a good deal of nonsense in all this, without any doubt. St. John was no philosopher; but it showed this: that he had a real admiration for the character, and could appreciate the dignity of a life of literary leisure. It is not to be supposed that he had not all the

time his eye fixed upon St. James's, or that he was not watching with eager curiosity that gradual reaction of public feeling, on which he and his friends eventually rode back to power. He was in constant correspondence with Harley, who remained in London, and was kept well apprised of every fresh step gained by Mrs. Masham, in her rivalry with the Duchess of Marlborough. It is not to be believed, however much the nation might be excited with the Duke's victories, that its common sense was entirely blinded by their brilliancy; and St. John must have seen with satisfaction that, after the dispersion of the Conference of Gertruydenberg in the winter of 1709-10, there was a fast-rising feeling in the country adverse to the conduct of the war. The growth of this sentiment emboldened the court party. Lord Sunderland, Marlborough's son-in-law, who had succeeded Harley, was dismissed from his post in June, and succeeded by the Tory Lord Dartmouth. In August he was followed by Godolphin, and the Treasury was put into commission, subject to the authority of Harley, now created Chancellor of the Exchequer. Finally, on the 19th of September the change of Ministry was completed by the discharge of Lord Somers and the remainder of the Whig officials, and the appointment of Tories in their room. Among these, St. John was recalled to office as Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

The Duke of Marlborough did not resign his command; nor does there seem to have been any intention of depriving him of it during the first months of the new administration. Between the Duke and Bolingbroke, however, there could be but little cordiality. The Duke resented

warmly the disgrace of his beloved duchess; and Bolingbroke shared the public indignation at the cupidity and nepotism of the Duke. It was whispered, moreover, that Marlborough, incensed at the loss of influence he had sustained by the change of ministry, had actually tampered with the army, which declared it would support the General. He seemed to have secured to himself a position which, in the then situation of affairs, was too great for a subject to possess. A hundred and fifty years ago a victorious general at the head of a powerful army filled with his own creatures, might really have been the object of an alarm not entirely visionary. But, after all, the continuation of the war was the real rock on which they split. What chance of accommodation was there between the general who was bent on going on with it, and the minister who was determined to arrest it? There is no necessity to blacken the character of Marlborough in order to excuse Bolingbroke, or blacken Bolingbroke in order to excuse Marlborough. But the Duke was no exalted patriot. He knew well enough that the war was a good thing for him, and he wished hostilities to last. He knew the Tories did not wish this; and, therefore, he still clung to the Whigs. Bolingbroke desired peace: and if the Duke would not help him to secure it, the Duke must go. He strove anxiously to persuade him. He could not, he said, listen with common patience to Marlborough when he talked of his "old friends the Whigs." The Tories were his old friends; they had supported him in the reign of the late king, and in the beginning of the present reign. "Let him," said he, "disengage himself from the Whigs, and put a stop to the fury

of his wife," and all will go well. But Marlborough liked the war too well to do the one, and feared his wife too much to do the other. He expected the new ministry to be a short-lived one; and staked his game upon the Whigs. He lost: and when the penalty was exacted, in the abstract he had no right to complain. Whether Bolingbroke illtreated the Duke, or the Duke abused the opportunities of his great position, will depend to a great extent on the policy or impolicy of the war. If this had now become unnecessary, Bolingbroke was clearly justified in superseding a general whose presence with the allied forces was an insuperable obstacle to peace.

The general election took place in October, 1710, and the Whigs were everywhere defeated. Bolingbroke himself was returned for Berkshire; and wrote in the highest spirits to his various correspondents abroad of the strength of the Tory party in the House. It is clear from many expressions in these letters, as well as from the decided character of his policy, that he now felt himself secure. Mr. Macknight complains that this ministry "was established on no solid foundations." If he had said that it was established on a narrow foundation, he would have been nearer the truth. There seem to have been three sources of the success of the Tory party at the elections. One was the general idea that by dismissing the Whig Ministry, the Queen had vindicated her prerogative; a sentiment which more than once during the eighteenth century proved of great advantage to the Crown. Another was weariness of the war expenditure, and a growing feeling that men who, like Lord Somers, could give no reason for

the continuation of the war, except that "he had been bred up in a hatred of France," were unfit to be entrusted with its management. The last and most important was the strong Church feeling which the impeachment of Sacheverel had evoked. The two first of these elements of strength might of course pass away in time. But the last would probably have survived for very many years longer. The rural clergy and gentry bore stamped upon their brain the one idea that the Whigs were hostile to the Church. Toleration was a word of ill omen to them. Was it not by holding out the bait of toleration that James II. had hoped to bring in Popery? These were not days they thought in which the utmost vigilance could be dispensed with. A strong Tory party in the House of Commons was, they said, absolutely necessary to prevent the Whig free-thinkers from breaking down at one blow all the barriers of the Church. On this deeply-rooted popular feeling Bolingbroke might have stood securely. Whether he would have stood creditably is perhaps a more debateable question.

He was told, he says, in 1715, when the question of the Chevalier's conforming to the Church of England was mooted, that "he was not thought the properest person to speak about religion." And the same kind of taunt has frequently been levelled at him since. Here, it is said, was a pretty champion of the Church. Here was a pattern of orthodoxy, who rushed from his mistress and his bottle to the rescue of the Catholic faith. Some sneers of this nature are to be found in Mr. Macknight's pages, but though plausible enough, we cannot on the whole really consider them well founded. In the reign of Queen Anne this question

of toleration was one of the questions of the day. Every statesman was obliged to take a side. It was quite impossible to ignore it. And what was there worse in Bolingbroke defending the Anglican theory of the Church than in Wharton or Walpole zealously defending the Protestant? At all events, it is a poor compliment to the Low Church party to contend that it is less incongruous for them than for their rivals to be supported by men of vicious lives. There is also another consideration to be taken into account before we close this page of our ledger. A man may lead a loose life without disbelieving the essential doctrines of the Church. This kind of inconsistency, moreover, was far commoner in the last century than it is at present. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Bolingbroke, at the age of thirty, had begun to think about the matter. He probably accepted the established religion of the country as other men of the world did, postponing the task of reconciling his faith and his practice to a more convenient season. Such a character as St. John's is not to be commended: by the more sensitive morality of the present age it would not be endured; but in the reign of Queen Anne no special opprobrium belonged to it. Finally, we must remember that statesmen of all ages in embracing a political creed, must take it as a whole. They cannot pick and choose. If Bolingbroke felt impelled to support Tory principles in the State, he had no option but to support them in the Church also.

Into Bolingbroke's private life during the next four triumphant years, most suggestive glimpses are afforded us in Swift's "Journal to Stella." Swift was introduced to

him in the month of November, 1711, and immediately became a member of the Brothers' Club, intended to be a smaller and more exclusive political gathering than the other clubs of the day, and also a trifle less convivial. The members at this time, besides Swift and Bolingbroke, were, the Premier, the Duke of Ormond, Arbuthnot, Prior, Freind, and Wyndham. They used to dine at the "Star and Garter," in Pall Mall, where a good deal of the literary work of the party was probably concocted. In this year the Secretary had started the *Examiner*, of which the earlier numbers were written exclusively by the Brothers. In one of these papers may be seen the maiden effort of Lord Bolingbroke as a political writer, in the shape of a letter to the editor, against the character and conduct of Marlborough. The piece has been extolled by good judges, but will not bear comparison with the latter productions of his pen; nor, however much we may admire a policy of "thorough," can we fail to regret that a statesman in Bolingbroke's position should have sunk the minister in the journalist. The thing was not quite so bad in that age as it would be in our own. But Bolingbroke would have exhibited more true dignity of character had he left this kind of work to its proper professors, the able literary coadjutors by whom he was surrounded. A transaction, recorded by Swift, which took place at one of the meetings of this club, is still more discreditable to all the parties concerned in it. Some nameless poet of the day had written a lampoon on Marlborough. The circumstance being mentioned in the company, an *impromptu* subscription was got up for him, to which the majority of the members subscribed two

guineas a piece, while Swift, Arbuthnot, and Freind, gave one. As stories like these come before us—and St. John never kept a secret—it is easy to see why the Whig party should have hated Lord Bolingbroke with a peculiar and enduring hatred. He gave no quarter; and when his own turn came, it is clear that he expected none. In the mean time, he revelled in the enjoyment of an amount of power, popularity, and social pleasure, such as few English ministers have combined either before or since. In his thirty-third year he was playing the foremost part in one of the greatest public transactions of which Europe has ever been the stage. He was the favourite of the people, and he gradually grew in favour with the queen. He was the first orator in Parliament; and in his hours of social relaxation, he had a circle of friends to fall back upon unrivalled for genius and accomplishments. The ease with which he satisfied the demands of so various a life astonished even Swift. At the Foreign Office he allowed the clerks no rest. He would sit at his own table from ten in the morning till eight at night. He learned the Spanish language in two months, on purpose to conduct the negotiations. Yet he found time also to enjoy a great deal of society, and to drink champagne and burgundy till all his compotators vanished. But this was not all. Not only did he work as hard as Mr. Pitt, and drink considerably harder; he had another weakness to indulge, from which that minister was free. If he saw a pretty woman in the street or in the park, no fear of public censure could restrain him from openly pursuing her. Yet all this time his wife continued to live with him, and to requite his infidelities by

unswerving solicitude and affection. When his excesses made him ill, she nursed him tenderly. And when he recovered he flew into the arms of prostitutes. But illness was a rare event with him. His constitution defied almost all trials, and seems to have been an hereditary gift. It is a common saying even now among the Wiltshire neighbours of his family, that there never was a St. John yet who had a good heart or a bad stomach. In the country he was a great sportsman, and peculiarly attached to dogs. He took an unfeigned interest in agriculture, and might be seen of a morning strolling about the fields, and chatting pleasantly on corn, grass, and cattle, with the Berkshire farmers, whom he would not unfrequently entertain at his own house afterwards, and regale with anecdotes of town, through a great cloud of tobacco-smoke. He was devoted also to the more refined pleasures of gardening; and displayed as much anxiety about the transport of some bay-trees from Holland, as he did about the terms of peace.

We might linger long over various details of this nature; but it is now high time that we began to examine more particularly the circumstances of this famous treaty, by which, after all, the character of St. John, both for statesmanship and honesty, must stand or fall. The questions which spring out of it appear to be three in number. First, Was Bolingbroke's conception of the war, and consequently his conclusion of the peace, right or wrong? Secondly, Did he carry out his resolution by warrantable or unwarrantable means? Thirdly, Had he any other ends to serve by making peace with France than those which appeared upon the surface?

Of the mere abstract expediency of the Treaty of Utrecht we do not imagine that many doubters yet remain. Still there are some, little howsoever as their authority may weigh with us. Impartial readers we hope to convince on this point by a comparatively brief retrospect of the circumstances of the case. The general object of the famous Partition Treaties must be known, we suppose, to every one who is sufficiently interested in the subject to care about reading this essay. It was simply to prevent the vast dominions of the Spanish crown from devolving, at the death of Charles II., upon either of the other two great powers of the Continent; that is, either France or Austria. To this end the arrangement, which was finally determined on in the month of March, 1700, was that the Dauphin should receive the greater part of the Italian possessions of the Spanish crown, and the Archduke Charles of Austria, Spain and the Indies. The Emperor of Austria refused to agree to this arrangement because, by the will of Philip IV. he was heir to the whole monarchy. So matters stood when, at the death of Charles II., it was found that France had stolen a march upon the Emperor by procuring another will from the late king, bequeathing the whole of his dominions to the Duke of Anjou. It was true enough that Louis himself had renounced any claim by descent to the Spanish crown when he married the elder daughter of Philip IV. But it was contended by Bolingbroke that the will of Charles II. had now placed France and Austria on an equal footing, and cancelled all preceding obligations. If Austria could point to the French renunciations, France in turn could point to a later will in her own favour,

which as far as Spain herself was concerned, renounced those renunciations. And if she appealed to public policy, there stood the Partition Treaty, which debarred her just as much as France from succession to the entire empire. England and Holland, from the very first, had no intention of supporting either. They had striven to defeat Austria, even while her right was still in force. Were they now going to war in support of the very same pretensions when that right was superseded? The notion is preposterous. They would prevent France from profiting by the will of Charles to swallow up the whole Spanish monarchy, but not that Austria might take advantage of the will of Philip to do exactly the same thing. On the contrary, the Duke of Anjou had been acknowledged by William III. as King of Spain, and the articles of the Grand Alliance, in 1701, only undertook,

1st. To provide an equitable and reasonable satisfaction to his Imperial Majesty for his pretension to the Spanish succession; and, 2ndly, Sufficient security to the King of England and the States General for their dominions, and for the navigation and commerce of their subjects; 3rdly, To prevent the union of the crowns of France and Spain, and the possession of the Indies by the former.

On this understanding the war began. It is very clearly put by Bolingbroke that Louis much over-estimated his own power when he thought it equal to the preservation of the whole bequest he had received. And the consequence of this was that, as early as 1706, seeing his mistake, he sued the Allies for peace, and was ready to have made peace in conformity with the above articles. But now, in turn, the Allies fell into exactly the same mistake as had misled Louis. As *he* had thought himself strong enough to keep

his grasp of the whole Spanish monarchy, so now did *they*, elated by their extraordinary successes, believe themselves strong enough to conquer it. Such a design had formed no part of the original compact—which had been to dismember, not to conquer, this great kingdom. It proved to be as impracticable as Louis's own design had been. It had become doubly impolitic, since the death of the Emperor Leopold, in 1705, had left the Archduke Charles, the Austrian candidate, heir presumptive to the empire. Yet for some reason or other, best known to themselves, Godolphin and Marlborough fell in with this new scheme, which was not merely a departure from, but a contradiction of, the principles of the Grand Alliance; and joined with the States General in demanding of Louis XIV. the surrender of the whole Spanish monarchy to the House of Austria. This is the "change of policy," which Bolingbroke so frequently refers to in his writings, and by which, as we have already seen, he justified his own change of conduct towards Godolphin and the Duke. To cut a long story short, the mistake was repeated by the Allies in 1709, and again in 1710, at the Conference in Gertruydenberg, when Louis went even still further in his offers of concession and compensation, stopping short, in fact, at nothing except the stipulation that he himself should take part in the expulsion of his grandson from Spain.

The reader is now qualified to understand Bolingbroke's views in the autumn of 1711, when the *Examiner* had first been set afoot. We may sum them up briefly as follows: His primary position was that we had a right to retire from the contest when its original object was attained, provided

that we could do so without betraying our allies. The original object of the war, he argues, was not to prevent a union between Spain and France any more than between Spain and any other first-class power; and a prince who stood as near to the Austrian succession as Philip stood to the French would have been an equally ineligible candidate for the vacant throne. But the Archduke Charles, who, in 1702, was not in the direct line of succession at all, had, in 1705, become Heir Apparent, and, in 1711, actual Emperor, while Philip of Anjou remained exactly where he was. Where was the wisdom, then, of protracting the war to exclude Philip when the result would be to crown Charles? Why effect a present junction between Spain and Austria to prevent only a contingent junction between Spain and France? Was not such a policy as this, so far from pursuing the original object of the war, to promote that very consummation which the war was undertaken to avert? Adding to these arguments the securities which Louis was willing to give against the union of the two monarchies, Bolingbroke conceived that the case for peace was unanswerable.

The only plea that has been put forward by the other side is this, that now we had an excellent opportunity of "humbling the power of France." This is a phrase that has been repeated *ad nauseam* by the enemies of the Treaty of Utrecht. But to say nothing of the fact that such was not the object of the war, a sufficient answer to it is that France *was* already humbled. She was so reduced and exhausted by the desperate exertions which she had made for ten years, that for the remainder of its existence the French monarchy was no more formidable to Europe.

Any further prosecution of the war, then, for such an object as this must have had for its sole motive the gratification of Austrian animosity, hoarded up for more than fifty years, and not the promotion of the general interests of Europe.

It has also been objected to the Treaty, that Bolingbroke in 1713 made worse terms than were offered in 1710. The answer is a simple one: in 1710 the war in Spain itself could not be said to be decided. The Austrian cause, indeed, was daily losing ground; but it still maintained some kind of footing there. But in 1713, the Spanish people had so umistakably declared for Philip that, except in one province only, the war had dwindled to a farce. Louis, therefore, was relieved from one element of pressure; Spain was no longer a lever in the hands of the Allies. But as, in spite of this difference, all the objects of the Grand Alliance were attained by the Treaty of Utrecht; and as the other conditions not insisted on by England had been framed rather with a view to mortify Louis than to serve the general cause, we cannot say, we think, that anything was really lost. Even had it been desirable to conquer the Spanish monarchy, this result, as Lord Macaulay points out, would probably have been as remote as ever, if the allies had marched victorious into Paris. As it was not desirable, there is no need to discuss the subject.

It is, therefore, we hold, undeniable that the Peace of Utrecht, viewed merely as an end in itself, was thoroughly wise and statesmanlike. The means by which it was secured, on the part of England, are less capable of absolute vindication. By one article of the Grand Alliance, the Allies were bound not to make peace separately. The ques-

tion, then, is, whether anything had occurred to absolve Queen Anne's Government from the observance of this condition. Bolingbroke defended the violation of it by two distinct lines of argument. The first we have already seen: the allies had not adhered to the original object of the war: and engagements entered into upon one understanding did not of necessity remain in force upon another. But the answer to this is, that England, having plunged into the enlarged enterprise, in company with the rest of the confederacy, and as willingly as any of them, had forfeited her right to appeal to the original contract in justification of her own secession; and that Bolingbroke himself, in 1710, instructed his correspondent at Amsterdam "to assure everybody that credit will be supported, the war prosecuted, the confederacy improved, and the principle on which we engaged pursued as far as possible." Had England, in 1706, continued the war under protest, or had Bolingbroke even, on his accession to office, given the Allies to understand exactly what they had to expect, the case would have been different. The death of the Emperor Joseph, in 1711, doubtless gave Bolingbroke, to some extent, new ground; yet, having once engaged heartily in a war, of which the avowed object, however foolish, was the conquest of the whole Spanish monarchy, that circumstance by itself could not absolve him from his obligations. The second line of argument is more cogent, though, we fear, we cannot hold it quite conclusive. It is, in fact, the argument of *tu quoque;* and as much validity as this argument ever does possess it possesses in the present instance. If the Queen had instructed the Duke of Ormond not to hazard a

battle in 1712, when a conference was already opened for discussing the terms of peace, the Dutch had forbidden the Duke of Marlborough to fight a battle in 1703, and again in 1705, when the war was at the hottest, and a victory of the utmost consequence. If the English Government had treated secretly with Louis, the Dutch and Austrians had intrigued secretly against England. In short, if England was accused of selfishly consulting her own interests, and of exposing her allies to ruin by withdrawing her troops from the scene of action, Bolingbroke could point to half a dozen instances in which both Holland and Austria had acted still more selfishly, and with still less regard for the interests of England or each other. The Dutch, by a secret treaty with Austria, which was discovered in 1712, had been permitted to draw an immense revenue from French and Spanish Flanders, in the shape of customs and other taxes. They fell greatly short of their stipulated contributions to the common fund, while the Queen had exceeded hers by twenty millions of money; and they could not be induced to undertake any expedition against the Spanish possessions in America, whence a large supply of silver annually found its way to the enemy. The Austrians, on their part, had come to some agreement with France, not certainly with Queen Anne's assent, by which, in 1707, the French troops evacuated Lombardy, and immediately became available for the reinforcement of the Duke of Berwick in Spain, where they shortly afterwards helped to destroy the British army at Almanza. In the same year they had spoiled what Bolingbroke considered the greatest enterprise of the war, by the recal of twelve thousand men at the most

critical moment, from before Toulon, the capture of which would have destroyed the naval power of France. Besides these proofs of loyalty and devotion, Austria, later in the war, at all events, never had a third of the men under arms which it was her duty to maintain; and actually, after the death of Joseph, the Emperor Charles retired to his hereditary dominions, and left the Allies to conquer a kingdom for him. Bolingbroke alleges also that both at the Treaty of Munster in 1648, and at Nimeguen in 1678, the Dutch themselves had set the example of deserting their allies, and that, consequently, they had no reason to complain when England deserted them.

Both the strength and the weakness of this reasoning is very apparent. The conduct of the Dutch and Austrians may palliate, but cannot justify, the course which Bolingbroke pursued. A policy of retaliation may be excusable but it is unworthy of a great country. But even if the separation from our allies was allowable—and the case is certainly a strong one—where was the necessity for deceiving them? It is impossible, we think, to doubt that, while Bolingbroke was writing letters to Mr. Drummond, at Amsterdam, full of contingents and quotas, and new expeditions against the enemy, he was writing letters to De Torcy, at Paris, to pave the way for a pacification. It almost seemed as if he was anxious to give France an opportunity of dealing with the Allies in detail; and to enable her, by this device, to save as much as possible from the wreck. If England had notified to the Allies, in the autumn of 1711, that it was not her intention to enter upon another campaign, it is highly probable that, however much they

might have resented her secession, they would have seen the wisdom of submitting. But, provoked by what they fancied to be treachery, when the campaign had just opened with success; and forgetting, of course, that they had ever done the same thing themselves, they were stung into prolonging the war after England had become only a spectator; and France had the satisfaction of making peace with the confederates separately, instead of meeting the demands of a united phalanx. We cannot, we say, discover any adequate excuse for this conduct; while the haste with which the treaty was hurried on—in order, apparently, to make sure of it—led Bolingbroke into an act of unjustifiable cruelty towards one small section of the alliance. The inhabitants of Catalonia were the only part of the Spanish nation who had stood by the Archduke Charles. They had fought stoutly to the last; and now, when peace was concluded, in spite of the previous assurances of protection which England had given them, they were abandoned to the vengeance of Philip.

After all, however, we confess it seems to us that all these delinquencies on St. John's part would long ago have been condoned but for the one suspicion which has always hung around his conduct, and disabled his apologists on the threshold. The Treaty was a wise one, and the end would in time have been allowed to justify the means, as in state affairs it mostly does. But this was not all. Had he, or had he not, any covert motive for propitiating the King of France, or was he actuated exclusively by dislike of our German allies, and zeal for the interests of Great Britain? On this point demonstration is impossible. But there are so many

straws which all blow in one direction, that we ourselves cannot doubt the existence of some such springs of action. Queen Anne herself, and two-thirds of the country gentlemen and clergy, were in favour of the Stuart dynasty, provided only due securities could be obtained for the Anglican Church. Bolingbroke saw in the succession of the Queen's brother his own best chance of continuing to rule this great empire. He may also, to do him justice, have sincerely believed in the impolicy of mixing ourselves up with Dutch and Austrian interests, with all the obligations they involved. It seemed, therefore, that a reversal of the Act of Settlement would be popular with the people, beneficial to himself, and conducive to the true interests of England. But a French alliance was almost a necessary part of this scheme, which might possibly have involved us in a war with the German Powers, and would, at all events, have estranged those allies with whom we had acted since the Revolution. We are willing to believe Bolingbroke when he assures us that no great *party* was formed during the Queen's lifetime for the elevation of James to the throne of England. If there *had* been, the result could not have been prevented. But we cannot bring ourselves to doubt that Bolingbroke, Atterbury, and some others were secretly hoping for this issue, and working in the dark to promote it. It is remarkable, indeed, that in his account of this period, which is to be found in the letter to Sir W. Wyndham, Bolingbroke contradicts himself, or rather makes admissions in a way that leads directly to this conclusion. He divides parties into three—the Whigs, the Tories, and the "Whimsicals"—counting himself among the Tories. Now

the Whimsicals were Tories, whose *differentia* consisted in being Hanoverians. The Whimsicals, or Hanoverians, Bolingbroke himself often calls them. But if the one section of the Tories was in favour of George the First, and if this preference was what distinguished them from the other, of whom or of what were *these* in favour? The inference seems tolerably obvious. And the question then arises to what extent we are to regard such sentiments as criminal if they ripenened into a distinct purpose.

To bar them at the outset, and to stamp them formally as treason, stood the Act of Settlement. But, as Mr. Macknight very fairly says, if the young Prince had renounced the Church of Rome, "the spirit of the Act of Settlement might have been set against the latter." As long as the Protestant succession was preserved, what necessity was there (so it might have been urged) to insist on seeing it carried out in the House of Hanover? It would appear, too, from Bolingbroke's "Letters on History," that he considered the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, although she had been declared illegitimate by an Act of Parliament, a precedent that might have been pleaded for the contravention of the Act of Settlement. However this may be, the Whigs obviously had the letter of the law on their side; and as Bolingbroke's schemes were unsuccessful, we presume they must be called treasonable.

It is this taint of Jacobitism which has set the political world, as his scepticism has set the religious world, against Lord Bolingbroke. But while fully acknowledging the superiority of parliamentary government to such a system as the Stuarts would have attempted, and thankful as we

may feel that the design of restoring them miscarried, it is only fair to consider that before parliamentary government had fully developed itself, statesmen had not the same reason that we have for approving the Hanoverian succession. George I. was a party king, as much as James III. would have been; and the Whigs feared for themselves under the one exactly what the Tories experienced under the other—exclusion from power, proscription, exile, perhaps the block. Jacobitism, moreover, in the reign of Queen Anne was a widely different thing from what it was under her successor. Treason to an actual sovereign, and treason to only a contingent one can never be placed on an equality. In the reign of Anne a Stuart still sat upon the throne; nor had the succession been as yet absolutely interrupted, Mary having been Queen Regnant as well as Queen Consort. To favour, under these circumstances, the title of the Queen's brother was evidently a much milder form of treason than to conspire against a new dynasty when firmly established on the throne. To prevent the succession of the Elector was a constitutional action compared with rebelling against the King. It is because people confound these two kinds of treason with each other that such deep injustice has been done to the memory of Lord Bolingbroke. Literally we may call him a traitor; but we deny that he was one morally, while most assuredly his fault, by whatever name it may be called, was widely distant from what those persons suppose who confound it with that of Monmouth or Kilmarnock.

With the death of Anne the great crash came. Bolingbroke attributes all that followed to the timidity, vacillation,

and self-conceit of Lord Oxford. It is not, however, easy to determine in what way these defects operated, unless by retarding the action of the ministers in relation to the Act of Settlement. According to St. John's own story, Harley seems to have been willing enough that James should come if somebody else would introduce him; but he was too fond of place to resign and give the part to Bolingbroke. While St. John was pining at the delay, and cursing his former friend; while Swift was boasting of the happy days that were to come when the Queen gave the staff to the Secretary, her Majesty unluckily died, and the Tories had nothing ready. The Whigs seized the opportunity; George was peaceably proclaimed; and after a very little while Bolingbroke fled for his life.

Bolingbroke's own amusing and sarcastic version of his engagement with the Chevalier is the best possible evidence of the Prince's unfitness to be king. A month's experience of his character cured the noble exile of Jacobitism. A mixture of weakness, pomposity, and insincerity is presented to us in this memorable story which can never be forgotten by its readers. The letter to Sir William Wyndham, Bolingbroke evidently intended as a final settlement of accounts between himself and his old associates. It is a formal renunciation of his allegiance to the House of Stuart: a minute explanation of his conduct from the death of Queen Anne to his retirement from James's service; and, as between himself and his party, is a complete vindication of his rectitude. It is in some respects his finest performance. In it he is perfectly frank, natural, and easy: bitter and satirical, but never stilted or gran-

diose. By its being addressed to Sir William Wyndham, we may presume that he shared the writer's sentiments: but it must have given deep offence to the remnants of the old Jacobites who had sat in Queen Anne's last Parliament, and had expected, perhaps, to see Bolingbroke come back in triumph with the King. All this was now over; and from the year 1716 to the day of his death, it does not appear that he ever, even for a moment, renewed his connexion with the Stuarts. Those who would care little for the historical part of the letter may still read it with interest for the curious glimpses it affords into the Pretender's and the Regent's mode of life, and of the flock of adventurers and adventuresses which thronged Paris at the time. How the Duke of Ormond fled to France in such extremities that he was glad of half of Bolingbroke's bed: how State affairs were transacted at a little house in the Bois de Boulogne, through the medium of Miss Trant and Fanny Oglethorpe, English favourites of the Regent, and one, it would appear, of the Chevalier: how "care and hope sat on every busy Irish face:" and "those who could write and read had letters to show, and those who had not arrived to this pitch of erudition had their secrets to whisper:" the reverend Abbé de Tencin "who was associated in all the political business of the two ladies;" "for I will not suppose," adds Bolingbroke, "that so pious a divine entered into any other secret:" the dirty Abbé Brigault: the foolish and fanatical James: and the dissolute and cool-headed Regent: all these people and their doings are placed before us by a few bold strokes, in lines that will never fade: and handled with a scorn and bitter-

ness which speak more clearly than a hundred set satires of the mortification, rage, and disappointment which were preying on the writer's heart.

Nobody, we fancy, now blames Lord Bolingbroke for the particular step in question—that is, accepting service with the Chevalier; nor is there any reason to linger over this episode in his life. We must hasten on to the last, and, in many respects, most suggestive epoch of his career, that, namely, in which, after his return to England, he became the leader of the new Tories out of doors, and aided in the management of the *Craftsman*, with Pulteney and Shippen, as twenty years before he had worked the *Examiner* with Swift and Arbuthnot. Bolingbroke's pardon was obtained in 1723, though he was still excluded from the House of Lords, and in that year he returned to England with his second wife, the Marchioness de Villette, who possessed a large property near Fontainebleau. He purchased a small estate at Dawley, near Uxbridge, and not a great way from Twickenham, and here, in the enjoyment of his favourite country pleasures, the society of Pope, Peterborough, Wyndham, and the rest of that brilliant circle, he passed the next ten years of his life agreeably enough, if not contentedly. He found a vent for his spleen in the practice of political journalism, and it was during this period that many of his finest works were written, the "Dissertation upon Parties," for instance, "Oldcastle's Remarks," and the articles and pamphlets which are now collected together under the title of "Political Tracts." It is to this period that those letters of Pope refer in which he describes himself as dining with Lord Bolingbroke off beans and bacon

or a barn-door fowl: and also those famous verses commemorating the social intercourse of such a company as the world has not often brought together:

> There my retreat the best companions grace;
> Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place:
> There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl
> The feast of reason and the flow of soul:
> And he whose lightning pierced the Iberian lines,
> Now forms my quincunx, and now ranks my vines;
> Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain,
> Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.

In 1735 Bolingbroke went abroad again for a few years, chiefly for the purpose of economising his means, as he had lived at greater expense, so said Swift, while he was at Dawley than even when he was Secretary of State. The "Letters on History" are dated from Chantelou, in Tourain, in the November of that year. On his return to England he resided chiefly at Battersea, resumed his old trade of pamphleteering, and till his death, in 1752, employed himself in educating the young generation of Tories who used to congregate at Leicester House. Through this channel his political principles were instilled into the mind of George III., in whose celebrated declaration on ascending the throne, that he meant to rule without party, we at once recognised the teaching of "The Patriot King."

The political writings which Bolingbroke composed between the year 1723 and his death, constitute, in our opinion, his best title to fame. And yet it is curious that they are all based upon a theory which would have kept down England to the level of a third-rate power. This is a very remarkable circumstance and worthy of a little more

consideration than his biographers have hitherto bestowed on it. We cannot, then, conclude this article better than by an attempt to epitomise Bolingbroke's political opinions, and account for the errors into which he fell with regard to the English constitution.

Bolingbroke's "Essays upon the History of England," extending from the Norman conquest to the dissolution of Parliament in 1640, are generally allowed by those who are well acquainted with them, even though they differ from Bolingbroke in every article of his political creed, to be one of the most succinct and correct analyses of English constitutional history that our literature can furnish. As his works are now comparatively little read, few people are aware to what an extent subsequent writers are indebted to him, or how far he had anticipated views which have been received of late years as novelties. His remarks on the English succession in the cases of Henry VII. and James I. are substantially the same as Hallam's. In his account of the civil war, he is thoroughly abreast of the public opinion of the nineteenth century. Elsewhere, in his sketch of the foreign policy of Cromwell, and his estimate of the Peace of the Pyrenees, he displays broad and philosophic views of European politics. He it was who first pointed out that Cromwell, though a giant in action, was deficient in a knowledge of Continental affairs, and that the policy which has been so lauded for its glorification of the British flag, was in reality that which entailed upon Europe the weight of Louis XIV.'s domination. The great Englishman, thought Bolingbroke, did not rise superior to the traditional feeling of the day, which taught him to regard Spain as the

formidable power of the period, and for the sake of weakening this already decrepit monarchy, he consented to aggrandize one that was waiting but a favourable opportunity to emulate Charles V.

With these enlightened views of both English and Continental history, unwarped by prejudice, and unhampered by those extreme opinions which some of his party still professed, how is it that Bolingbroke, in his observations on contemporary events, has seldom exceeded the bounds of brilliant declamation? Men with not a tithe of his historical or constitutional information, with not a twentieth part of his genius and his energy, nevertheless threaded their way more successfully than he did through the great problem of the Revolution. Not, probably, that they could have explained to themselves any better than he did the law which underlay it: but they felt their way slowly and doubtfully, and so managed at last to work out the great change successfully which Bolingbroke to his dying-day never completely understood. The truth seems to be that while he had the true literary fondness for generalisation, his early life and training had not equally used him to reflection. As Burke was the philosopher whom circumstances carried into politics, so St. John was the politician whom circumstances threw back upon philosophy. In all his writings we detect that plain common-sense, that deference to all obvious and familiar considerations, which marks the mind accustomed to business, and the management of bodies of men; but we miss the searching insight, and the prophetic reach, which are necessary to the full appreciation of great political changes. Bolingbroke, accord-

ingly, collecting one or two great principles from our early English annals, and thoroughly sympathising with the spirit in which the best princes of the ancient régime had governed, chose to consider that under all circumstances the English Government must be brought into accordance with those. The idea of Parliamentary Government, as it operated from 1700 to 1832, he never grasped. He still harped upon the image of a sovereign who should be powerful or impotent, as he governed in accordance with, or in opposition to, the true interests of his people. He never seems to have seen that it was precisely the inconvenience resulting from such a system as this that the Revolution was intended to remove. For, after all, who was to determine what *was* for the true interests of the people? This difficulty apparently never struck Bolingbroke. It must obviously be somebody who had the power to enforce his theories, whether popular or otherwise, whether true or false. In the days of the Tudors this power resided in the sovereign; with the Revolution it was transferred to the aristocracy; with the Reform Bill it was shared with the people. But this was exactly the change to which Bolingbroke steadily shut his eyes. He had learned his political lesson before that change had been completed, and while its progress was still obscure; and he refused to go to school again. All the phenomena of the age, too, conspired to favour his mistake and to heighten the contrast he was so fond of drawing between the England of the Guelphs and the England of the Tudors and Plantagenets. It was difficult to look at George the Second, and resist the force of Bolingbroke's appeal to Queen Elizabeth: to look at

Sir Robert Walpole, the bad part of whose system lay upon the surface, while the good of it remained to be discovered, and not to sigh with Bolingbroke over the memory of Walsingham and Burleigh. It was difficult, after the Whig minister had been nearly twenty years in power, supported by organised corruption, to find a practical answer to the complaint that government, "by management," was as absolute, and might be made as irresponsible, as government by prerogative: and that, in Bolingbroke's own words, "liberty was being undermined for fear it should be overthrown." It would be difficult to do so even now, but for the one fact which changes the whole complexion of the case, that underneath the abuses of Walpole lay the germs of that system which made England the arbitress of Europe, while under the glories of Elizabeth lay the germs of that system which levelled her for the time with the monarchies of Naples or Sardinia. In the reign of George the Second, moreover, the personal authority of the sovereign had undoubtedly sunk below that point, at which the public opinion of the day was willing to maintain it; and this fact, again, was calculated still further to mislead the panegyrist of the old régime. Personal hatred of Walpole gave reality and purpose to his visions; his lively imagination readily ministered to his passions; and thus, on all this class of subjects he was betrayed into fanciful flights of eloquence, on which, were he now alive, he would be the last man to rest his reputation.

But while so keen an intellect as Bolingbroke's was thus deceived, we are not to suppose that the men who were opposed to him were gifted with more foresight than him-

self. Their success was, to a great extent, the result of their ignorance. Had not the British constitution, the British character, and the British purse possessed vast recuperative energies, our liberties, our morals, and our credit must have staggered, if not have fallen, under the burden imposed on them by the Revolution. Fortunately for us we were strong enough to bear strong remedies. During the process, those whose hands were full, and who had no leisure to think about it, were the best off. Such as were compelled to be idle and to look on at the experiment could not help perceiving the danger and shuddering at the spectacle. Bolingbroke would have fought manfully under the new banner if he had once found himself in harness; but lolling on his haycocks at Dawley, and fretting at his forced inaction, he gave way to political speculations which partake of the nature of day-dreams. He believed himself a second Cicero in exile, and gratified his taste by a great deal of fine writing to prove that Walpole and his party were re-enacting the part of Augustus, who only exercised absolutism more readily through the medium of a servile senate. But such language as this was not natural to the man. His brain was too strong, his intellect too masculine, not at once to have seen through the flimsiness of his own theories, had anything occurred to rouse him. As it was, though not durable, his representations were very damaging at the moment to the men he most wished to injure. In their composition there can be no doubt he took great delight. In "The Patriot King" it is difficult not to believe that his enthusiasm is often sincere, and that he believed in the possibility of realising the vision he had

conjured up. Plato's ideal State and Bolingbroke's ideal King are in reality built upon one and the same hypothesis: that government among men is to be framed directly on the model of the Divine government; that the highest wisdom and goodness of which man is capable, are to be found, if we know how to find them, united in either one or some very few persons; that these are to be invested with absolute authority which mankind will always cheerfully recognise; and that then at length we shall have the realisation of the following picture:

What, in truth, can be so lovely, what so venerable, as to contemplate a king on whom the eyes of a whole people are fixed, filled with admiration and glowing with affection, a king in the temper of whose government, like that of Nerva, things so seldom allied as empire and liberty are intimately mixed, co-exist together inseparably, and constitute one real essence? What spectacle can be presented to the view so rare, so nearly divine as a king possessed of absolute power, neither usurped by fraud nor maintained by force, but the genuine effect of esteem, of confidence, and affection, the free gift of Liberty, who finds her greatest security in this power, and would desire no other if the prince on the throne could be what his people wish him to be—immortal? Of such, and of such a prince alone, it may be said with strict propriety and truth—

"——volentes
Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo."

Civil fury will have no place in this draught; or if the monster is seen, he will be seen as Virgil describes him—

"——et centum vinctus ahenis
Post tergum nodis, fremit horridus ore cruento."

He must be seen, subdued, bound, chained, and deprived entirely of his power to do hurt. In his place concord will appear, brooding peace, prosperity on the happy land; joy sitting in every face, content in every heart; a people unoppressed, undisturbed, unalarmed; busy to

improve their private property and the public stock; fleets covering the ocean, bringing home wealth by the returns of industry; carrying assistance or terror abroad by the direction of wisdom, and asserting triumphantly the right and the honour of Great Britain, as far as winds can waft them.

Set against this is the theory that the less we trust to individuals the better; and that the best form of government is that which works the most like an automaton; which considers that governing men, the golden souls, are but few and far between; and that of these few, at least a moiety do not use their strength for good; that a complex government is, therefore, the one best adapted to the condition of humanity; and that truth and justice will be elicited rather by the collision of opposing forces than by the uniform action of one. Such was probably the opinion of Cicero. Such was certainly the opinion of that English statesman who most of all resembled Cicero—Edmund Burke.

The style in which Bolingbroke commended these views to the world was accepted in his own day as the finest production of the English language. And after all the changes of taste which a hundred years have witnessed, it continues to command admiration. His fault is, that he is too diffuse, and too fluent. His Essays are dictated speeches. Few things that he has written would not be improved by condensation. But, on the other hand, his sentences by themselves are often exquisitely finished; and his pages glitter with epigram. When he gives full play to his powers of sarcasm he tears an antagonist to pieces, as if he were breaking him on the wheel. And he sometimes,

though rarely, rises to a strain of grave and earnest eloquence, in which he is for the moment what he would have had the world believe him always. As, however, it was the object of this essay to determine the position of Bolingbroke, not in English literature, but in English politics, we cannot enlarge on this topic, or give quotations in support of our opinion.

WILLIAM PITT.*

THERE are probably not many discoveries to be made concerning the subject of these volumes. Pitt was a Minister as far removed above the intrigues of common statesmen as above the intellects of common men. In private life he betrayed none of those frailties which, however deplorable in a hero, make biography more interesting by widening the circle within which mysteries can be bred and public curiosity be detained. Whether as a man or a minister, he stood out in singularly bold relief before the public eye. He had no secrets, either political or social. When he came into power, he came in because he was necessary to Government, not because Government was necessary to him. In 1783 he stood quite clear of the equivocal transaction between Lord Temple and the king, which ended in the discomfiture of the coalition. In 1804 he held himself aloof from all men, and did not return to his post till Addington had

* The Life of the Right Hon. William Pitt. By Earl Stanhope. Author of "The History of England from the Peace of Utrecht." Vols. i. and ii. London: Murray.

proved his own incompetence, and the public voice unanimously called him to the helm. He had no wife, nor any liking for the wives of other men, and his observance of the seventh commandment was a standing subject of ridicule among the followers of Charles Fox. He stood out from among the place-hunters and pleasure-hunters of the age in upright and fearless isolation—a man who might be seen all round, and was utterly indifferent to anything which the closest inspection could discover. There has probably never been a Prime Minister of this country who answers so completely to the idea conveyed by the popular phrase of being "above-board." So that while continually new anecdotes are being dug up out of family papers relating to all the other leading statesmen of the last hundred years, about Pitt alone, in all that mass of political correspondence which has been given to the world since he died, have we gleaned next to nothing that is new. We call attention to this circumstance in order that the general reader may know how to estimate the present volumes. A good Life of Mr. Pitt must be the most important political biography in the English language; but we have no hesitation in saying that it will not be the most interesting. It must inevitably lack much of the picturesqueness, and much also of the passion, which interest the majority of readers; and we wish them, therefore, to understand that this will not be the fault of Earl Stanhope.

The hitherto unpublished materials for a Life of Pitt, of which Lord Stanhope had the command, consist of Pitt's letters to his mother, which extend from his boyhood down

to 1799; of Pitt's letters to his brother, Lord Chatham, which do not begin till 1794; and of George III.'s letters to Mr. Pitt. Many other valuable sources of information which the kindness of friends laid open to him, have been previously examined, and their contents given to the public in other shapes. But all alike seem to confirm the popular view of his character; and to show that as he died of old age at forty-six, so he was a man of middle age at twenty-three.

The old stories of his boyhood are all reproduced in Lord Stanhope's first few pages. When he was only seven years old he said he was glad that he was not the eldest son, as he wanted "to speak in the House of Commons, like papa." Lady Holland's prediction, that "that little boy will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives," is not omitted, but is accompanied by the caution that it is of dubious authenticity. Pitt's life, however, begins with his entry into the House of Commons. This took place on the 23rd of January, 1781, when he was twenty-one years and eight months old, and it was exactly twenty-five years from this very date when he died—*i.e.* on the 23rd of January, 1806. Within a year and a half from his entry into Parliament he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and virtual leader of the House of Commons; in less than three years he was Prime Minister; and for the remainder of his natural life he was, with perhaps one exception, "the foremost man in all this world."

Pitt's ministerial career divides itself naturally into two nearly equal stages—that is, from his first acceptance of the Treasury, in December, 1783, to the declaration of war

against France in February, 1793, and from the latter event to his resignation of office in 1801. His brief subsequent tenure of the seals seems to be regarded by Lord Stanhope as a kind of supplement to his first ministry, and a period that should be treated by itself. The former of the above-mentioned stages is considered by many persons as the most truly glorious period of Pitt's long administration. Two very high authorities, and men of widely different sentiments—namely, Mr. Disraeli and the late Lord Macaulay—coincide in this opinion; though, as was to be expected, their conclusions are derived from exactly opposite points of view. Mr. Disraeli thinks that it was only during this period that Pitt was a genuine Tory. Lord Macaulay avows that during this period he was a better Whig than Charles Fox. These conflicting estimates form a curious illustration of what Mr. Pitt said himself—that he belonged to neither party. It has always seemed to us, however, that Lord Macaulay, and, as it would now appear, Pitt himself at his first entry into politics, confounded measures with principles. Pitt's *measures* during the earlier years of his administration were as liberal as need be. But the *principle* of government which he embodied in his own person, and of which after a lapse of sixty years he is still the great representative, was the king's right to choose his own ministers. This is the essence of Toryism in its best sense. And the minister who stood by this principle was a Tory, let his policy be what it might. On the other hand, the Whig principle of government is equally plain and intelligible

—that is, that the functions of the crown are ministerial rather than regulative, and that the only use of the sovereign is to carry out the policy of the aristocracy. These two opposing principles were quite clear, and constituted an easy test by which a man's party could be determined. But if we once come to the consideration of measures, we shall find it very difficult to say what are Whig and what are Tory measures. Pitt's measures were liberal in every sense of the word. Free-trade, Parliamentary Reform, the French alliance, and relief to the Roman Catholics were all his favourite ideas. But if these were characteristic of either of the two great parties, they were characteristic of the Tories. Free-trade was opposed in 1785 by the manufacturers, and supported by the country gentlemen; and in 1845 it was opposed by the country gentlemen and supported by the manufacturers. If, therefore, free-trade is to be named after either of our two great parties, the Tories, who were the first to introduce it, are unquestionably its rightful godfathers. Pitt, again was the first Prime Minister who broached the question of Reform; the first Prime Minister who denounced the doctrine that France was our natural enemy; and the first Prime Minister who advocated the relief of the Roman Catholics. On the majority of these he was vehemently opposed by the Whigs. Yet we are to be told that during the first ten years of his administration he was acting upon Whig principles! Now we can perfectly well understand, if it could be shown that the Whigs and Tories had changed places for a while upon these particular sub-

jects, that Lord Macaulay's position was defensible. But the Whigs had *never* advocated any fragment, even, of the above-mentioned policy. The measures introduced by Pitt were either wholly new, or else conceived in accordance with the traditions of Toryism. To coolly appropriate them to his own party, is one of the most audacious feats ever perpetrated by the great Whig champion; and is not wholly unlike the assertion of certain French writers alluded to by Lord Stanhope, namely that, Wellington's Spanish victories were chiefly due to French instruction. * The fact, however, that the whole of this Liberal programme did subsequently pass into the hands of the Whig party, has tendered to obscure the real history of Liberalism; and has alone made it possible that misstatements like those of Lord Macaulay should so long pass unquestioned. All however that we care to maintain is, that particular measures, though a very good means of distinguishing the Conservative from the Radical, afford no means at all of distinguishing the Tory from the Whig. In these days the latter distinction has almost ceased to be a real one. It has become a question of purely historical interest. But in Pitt's time it was the only distinction which existed. The principle it involved was desperately contested at intervals down even to the beginning of the Regency. Of Mr. Pitt* himself, as the leader of a great party, it formed the *differentia*. And when Fox refused to subscribe to his old rival's funeral, it was not because Pitt had been a Free-trader while Fox was a Protectionist; not because Pitt

* C. F. "Essay on Party."

had waged war on "French principles" while Fox had encouraged them; but because Pitt had all his life acted on a theory of government which was hostile to the theory of Whiggism. This much we learn from the lately published diary of Lord Colchester. And it is manifestly impossible to understand the whole career of Pitt unless we come to it with a full comprehension of that which was its leading characteristic.

We have said that Mr. Pitt himself seemed a little uncertain upon this point at his first entry into Parliament. He entered the House of Commons as a member of that small party of which Lord Shelburne was the leader, and the memory of Lord Chatham the inspiring spirit. Lord Chatham, however, was a Chathamite, and nothing else; and he used the language sometimes of one party and sometimes of another, as suited the necessities of the moment. When Shelburne accepted office in 1782 with Pitt for his Chancellor of the Exchequer, he "defended the stand which he had made against the dictation of Fox and Cavendish, by his adherence to the maxims of one whom he called his master in politics, the late Earl of Chatham. 'That noble earl,' he said, 'always declared that the country ought not to be governed by any oligarchical party or family connexion, and that if it was to be so governed, the Constitution must of necessity expire.'" But Chatham had not always spoken thus. In 1763 he told George III. that his Government could not be carried on without the great families who had supported the Revolution Government. The younger Pitt accordingly had not in 1782 come to see the situation of affairs quite as

clearly as he did afterwards. Whig associations hung about his boyhood; and another circumstance which contributed to blind him for the moment was the part taken by the Tories in the American war. Lord Chatham had condemned this contest; and the third speech delivered by his son to the House of Commons condemned it in a string of violent epithets which the father could never have exceeded. Consequently, when it became necessary for Shelburne to strengthen his Government by an alliance either with Lord North and the large party of Tories who still adhered to him, or with Fox and the regular old Whigs, Pitt was in favour of the latter. He saw in Lord North only the promoter of a war which he had called unnatural and diabolical. He did not see in him the representative of the liberty of the sovereign, which his father had pronounced essential to the British Constitution. The magnitude of a particular disaster had overshadowed in his mind the importance of the general principle. The more experienced Shelburne was not deceived for a moment; and pointed out to his youthful colleague that North was their natural ally. Lord North was himself of this opinion; and when at length the Prime Minister had resolved to act firmly on a truth which he perceived so clearly, even though it cost him the secession of Mr. Pitt, Lord North replied, with some regret, that he could not meet Lord Shelburne now; "it was too late." This was after he had been drawn, by the arts of Eden and Wedderburne, into the coalition with Fox. But we know from the Auckland Correspondence that his first and natural impulse was to unite his forces with Lord Shelburne.

That this difference of opinion with Lord Shelburne was one of the few mistakes which Pitt committed is, we think, undeniable. But he very soon retrieved his error; and acted with such consistency upon the principles avowed by Shelburne and deduced from the teaching of Lord Chatham, that Fox, the most generous of men, could not even forgive him in his grave.

The chief events of Pitt's Administration, up to 1793, though he conducted this country to an extraordinary pitch of material prosperity, are not such as to interest the reader in detail. In Lord Stanhope's pages he will find the history of the rival India Bills of Pitt and Fox; of Pitt's financial reforms; of his efforts at relaxing our own commercial code in favour of Ireland; of the Sinking Fund; of the French Commercial Treaty; and of the part which he played in the impeachment of Warren Hastings, in the French encroachments upon Holland, and the Russian encroachments upon Turkey,—described with singular fairness and clearness, and in a pleasing unaffecting style. The great benefits conferred on this country by this wise and peaceful administration are now admitted by all parties. Lord Macaulay thought them so great that he felt obliged to claim them for Whiggism. Lord John Russell has summed them up in almost the same words as Lord Stanhope; and Lord Stanhope's own words we here extract:

> With the declaration of war by France in February, 1793, or with the preparations for that war a few weeks before, the first and the peaceful part of Pitt's administration ends. It was a period of nine years—the most prosperous and happy, perhaps, that England ever

yet had known. I have related how the consummate financial skill of the young Prime Minister converted deficiency to surplus, and augmented the revenue while lessening the taxes. I have related how a firm and most resolute tone to foreign Powers—as to France in the case of Holland, and to Russia in the case of Ockzakow—was found not inconsistent with the rapid expansion of commerce, and the almost unexampled growth of credit at home. And let me add, that the benefit of these measures was by no means limited to the period thus described, since it was mainly the sap and strength imparted by them which enabled the nation to sustain and finally triumph over the perils of the conflict that ensued.

It was in the affair of Ockzakow, however, that Pitt experienced his first check in foreign policy. He had demanded of the Empress Catherine of Russia, that she should restore that fortress to the Turks. The Empress refused: and Pitt, in concert with his allies, Prussia and Holland, was prepared to have recourse to arms. Orders were given to have a fleet, known at that time as "The Russian Armament," in readiness; and a peremptory note was despatched to the Court of St. Petersburg. When, however, the King's message was communicated to the House of Commons, it met with a violent opposition, which gradually spread through the country; and Pitt was driven to recede. But he had detected the state of public feeling so quickly, and acted upon it with so much promptitude, that he was able to prevent his last note from being delivered at the Russian Court. The proper explanations were given to Russia and Holland, and the crisis was surmounted without any damage to the reputation of England, though not without a temporary blow to the popularity of Mr. Pitt. The Minister, however, had shown himself as great in defeat as in victory. The rapidity with which he caught

the tone of public opinion, and the admirable self-control with which he at once acted upon it, proclaim the ruler of mankind no less than the great fight of '83, or those European combinations of which he was the animating spirit to the last day of his existence.

It is these that we are now called on to examine with the second stage of Mr. Pitt's administration, commencing in 1793. It is, says Lord Stanhope:

> Almost exclusively the second part of Pitt's administration on which the more recent controversies turn. Two accusations of especial weight have been brought against it by Lord Macaulay. His short biography of Pitt, to which I have already more than once referred, seems to me, when taken as a whole, distinguished by candour and judgment as much as by eloquence and genius. But even from such a quarter grave imputations are not to be implicitly received. In the task which I have undertaken they ought to be frankly discussed. Therefore, though with all due deference, with all the respect that I owe to the memory both of a great historian and of a departed friend, I shall here insert some observations written in his lifetime, and designed to meet his own eye in reference to both his heads of charge.

These two charges are, as our readers may remember, that in the repressive measures which Pitt exercised at home he was too vigorous, and that in those which he undertook abroad he was not vigorous enough. His "gagging bills" and his alien bills, and his prosecutions were unjustifiably harsh. His military and diplomatic operations were unjustifiably remiss. The first of these charges is commented on by Lord Stanhope in very general terms but with perfectly good sense. The gist of his reply is that as revolutions cannot "be made with rose-water," neither can they be put down with rose-water; and that when a tree of liberty was planted, and a cry of "no king" raised, a revo-

lution had virtually begun. But, in truth, this is just one of those charges that never *can* be answered, and ought therefore never to be made. If a man has a serious illness from which he recovers after submitting to the usual remedies, it is always possible to tell him that he would have recovered quite as soon without them, and that he is a great fool to have incurred such a heavy doctor's bill. The rival doctor can always give out that he would have cured him for half the money, and at much less inconvenience to the patient. If a man has a bad leg, and one surgeon cuts it off, another is sure to say he could have kept it on. Who is to confute him? People will go on talking in this way to the end of time; and the best plan is to let them alone. If a minister brings us safely through a perilous crisis, without doing anything which the common sense of his contemporaries does not heartily accept, it is surely all we need ask of him. And that Mr. Pitt did.

With regard to the second part of the charge, we may first of all consider whether Pitt was right in going to war at all; and this question is disposed of by Fox's own subsequent admission that he was. Whether he went to war with sufficient vigour or no is, perhaps, a more debateable point. But we have never understood what Lord Macaulay meant by saying that "he should have proclaimed a Holy War for religion, morality, property, order, public law, and should have thus opposed to the Jacobins an energy equal to their own." Lord Stanhope seems to suppose he understands what Lord Macaulay meant, and he answers it as follows:

Let it, however, be remembered to what the policy of Burke in its full extent would lead. Look to his "Thoughts on a Regicide Peace."

See how we might deduce from them the duty of making no terms with France unless the Bourbons were restored—of shunning as a pestilence such a pacification as we attempted at Lille and actually achieved at Amiens. Surely that is not the course which a philosophic historian of the nineteenth century, writing with a clear view of the succeeding events, is prepared to recommend.

No doubt Pitt was extremely mortified at witnessing the premature arrest of that able and productive peace policy which he had pursued for the last ten years. It is possible that he doubted in 1793, as he had done in 1787, "whether anything could repay the disturbing that state of growing affluence and prosperity in which the country now is, and whether this is not increasing so fast as to make her equal to meet any force France could collect some years hence." That he shrunk from looking in the face a great twenty years' war was only natural and excusable; and this disposition *may* have imparted some little hesitation and even narrowness to his primary arrangements for the struggle. But that, when he had once become convinced of its necessity, he did not act with extraordinary energy and resolution, is an assertion contradicted by the very admissions of his enemies, and is indignantly repudiated by Lord Stanhope:

If then it can be shown that Pitt as Prime Minister strove with unremitting toil by day and night for the success of that war in which he had reluctantly, but on a high sense of duty engaged—if in his plans he consulted the most skilful officers in his power—if in his diplomacy he laboured to build up new coalitions when the first had crumbled away—if for that object he poured forth subsidies with a liberal, nay, as his enemies alleged, a lavish hand—if he sought to strike the enemy whenever or wherever any vulnerable point lay bare, on the northern frontier when in concert with the Austrian armies, on the southern coast when Toulon had risen, on the western coast when

a civil war broke out in La Vendée—it seems hard that, having striven so far as a civilian could strive for the success of our arms both by land and sea, the reverses on the former should be cast upon his memory, whilst at the same time he is allowed no merit for our triumphs on the latter.

To impute our military miscarriages in the early part of the war to Pitt is as puerile as to refuse him all credit for our naval successes is unjust. Whatever influence he exercised over the one, he exercised over the other too. If our generals had been as good as our admirals, our armies would have done as much as our fleets. Our successes must always depend to a great extent on the genius of our commanders. No official energy at the Horse Guards or in Downing-street could have made the Duke of Cumberland or the Duke of York a good general; while no official mismanagement could have prevented the successes of Wellington. Most of Wellington's greatest victories were gained when Mr. Perceval was Prime Minister. Yet not even Lord Macaulay would have said that if Perceval had been in Pitt's place the Duke of York could have preserved Holland, or that if he had been in Newcastle's place the Duke of Cumberland would have beaten Saxe. Our only great military success during Chatham's administration was the conquest of Canada; and that was the result of one victory—an event that might happen under any administration, and did happen under Pitt's. The rest of our acquisitions under Chatham were the results of our naval superiority. But under Mr. Pitt we gained the six greatest naval victories this country has to boast of. And as for successes on the continent of Europe, if we had little to be proud of at the death of Pitt, we had as little on the re-

tirement of his father, the only victory in which we had taken any part being the battle of Minden, where the English general wouldn't fight.

Our great glory during the Revolutionary War is, that we had sufficient stamina to undergo so severe a schooling; so that when the master-mind of Pitt no more controlled our councils, we had generals trained to go alone, whose vigour and capacity made up for the feebleness of the Home Government during the six years that followed his death. If from 1806 to 1812 we had had the same class of generals to serve us as we had from 1794 to the peace of Amiens, the honour and independence of this country would, indeed, have been in jeopardy. It was the genius of Pitt that neutralised the incompetence of our officers. But under any minister of less vigour and popularity our early reverses might have given a stimulus to domestic treason, which, coupled with the additional encouragement thereby held out to an invader, might have led to the subversion of the monarchy, if not to the subjugation of the island.

Mr. Pitt has been blamed for the resignation of 1801, under the mistaken idea that it was a mere ruse to enable him to get rid of the difficulty of making peace. As both Lord Macaulay and Lord J. Russell have renounced this theory, Lord Stanhope does not take the trouble to combat it at any length—contenting himself with the counter-assertion that it was the Roman Catholic question and nothing else which forced him to resign office.

It has, indeed, been made quite clear by the lately published Life of Lord Castlereagh that the Union was not carried by means of any pledge given to the Roman Ca-

tholics. But both Lord Stanhope and Sir Archibald Alison agree in saying that the Romanists had a moral claim on Mr. Pitt, as it was chiefly owing to their neutrality that the measure finally became law. We know, moreover, that the simple fact of the Union *having* been passed did, in the judgment of Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh, place the whole Catholic question upon a different footing. Before that event, in an Irish Parliament, emancipation would have given to the Roman Catholics absolute supremacy. Afterwards it could never conduct them to any but a very subordinate degree of Parliamentary influence. Under these circumstances Mr. Pitt felt so strongly the propriety of proceeding with the measure that he resolved once more to face the opposition of the King. We must recollect, however, that he had many reasons for believing that his Majesty would not prove inexorable. He had been obstinate against the dismissal of Lord Thurlow—against the recal of the Duke of York from Flanders—against the negotiations for peace with France. On all these points "he had shown not only aversion but anguish of mind." Yet on all these points he had given way in the face of an imperative necessity. Why should he not do the same in this case? And in fact it seems by no means improbable that he would have done so, but for the treacherous behaviour of one man, whom the King himself afterwards described as the greatest knave in his dominions.

In the year 1795, Lord Loughborough, who was then very anxious to ingratiate himself with the King, had given him a written opinion* to the effect that Roman Ca-

* Composed, it would appear, by Lord Clare.—*Auckland Diary.*

tholic Emancipation might be held by implication to violate the coronation oath. This opinion he carefully concealed from his colleagues, not only at that time, but for many years afterwards. The paper, however, was preserved, and is to be seen in Lord Campbell's "Lives." In the autumn of the year 1800, Lord Loughborough and the King were both staying together at Weymouth, while Pitt, Castlereagh, and Lord Grenville were daily meeting in council on the subject of the Roman Catholic claims. On the 25th of September Pitt wrote to the Lord Chancellor, who the year before had acquiesced in the proposed measure, apprising him of the stage which their discussions had then reached, and begging him to return to town. In conformity with the usual practice Pitt did not intend to submit his project to the King till it had been considered in turn by all the members of the Cabinet, and could fairly be described as the result of their joint deliberations. Nobody could have understood this practice better than Lord Loughborough. But even had he not known it, he knew this—that Pitt and not himself was the proper person to communicate the project to the King. But here, unluckily, was an opportunity not to be lost. He was alone with the King, and he showed him Mr. Pitt's letter, which raised, we are told, "great anxiety and displeasure in the royal breast." On this occasion there is very little doubt that he repeated the opinion which he had delivered in 1795; and, having thus prepared the King's mind for an obstinate resistance, he set out to London to join his unsuspecting colleagues. Not a syllable of his communications with the King did he breathe to them. But, greatly to their surprise, who re-

membered his previous acquiescence, he now declared that he would never give his assent to the admission of the Romanists to Parliament. The Cabinet broke up in consequence of this declaration. The subject was adjourned for three months; and intelligence was transmitted to Ireland that unforeseen difficulties had arisen. Meantime the Chancellor was not allowing the grass to grow under his feet. He instigated his coadjutor, Lord Auckland, to persuade his brother-in-law, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to write to the King upon the subject. And before the meeting of Parliament he transmitted another paper to the King, urging all the usual objections to the measure with all the force and ability for which he was distinguished. "Some men," says Lord Stanhope, with quiet sarcasm, "may ascribe to him, if they think fit, a devout and irrepressible zeal for Protestant ascendancy: others may believe that he was secretly aiming at the highest object of political ambition, and designing to make himself Prime Minister on the ruins of Mr. Pitt, and with the aid of some deputy in the House of Commons." The result, however, is well known. The King remained inexorable. Pitt ceased to reign at the Treasury, and Mr. Addington was promoted to his place. But what became of Lord Loughborough? By a rare instance of poetical justice he fell never to rise again. So far from getting the Treasury, he was obliged to abdicate the Woolsack. And in spite of numerous attempts to ingratiate himself with every party in the State, and a delusion in which he long hugged himself that he was a prime favourite at Windsor, the sun of office never shone on him again.

As for Mr. Pitt, he doubtless believed that his resignation was necessary, both to prove his own sincerity and to subdue the obduracy of the King. He did not then know that the natural aversion of his Majesty had been still further excited by the religious exhortations of the Chancellor. As it turned out, the King was so agitated by the distress and anxiety which he underwent at this period that his mind again became disordered; and it was in consequence of observing the strength of his Majesty's feelings upon the subject that Mr. Pitt finally resolved not to moot the question again during the King's lifetime. The mischief, however, now was done. Pitt was out of office. And although the only one obstacle to a good understanding between himself and his master was removed, it was not so easy to get in again. Pitt and Addington were old and intimate friends. Pitt was not base enough to turn him out; nor had Addington that very rare degree of magnanimity which would have induced him to resign spontaneously. The opposition made a great show of supporting Addington by way of expressing their contempt for the administration of Mr. Pitt. And the King himself was never weary of expressing his esteem and affection for *his* Chancellor of the Exchequer. Finally the new Minister had a considerable Parliamentary majority, which made up in anti-Catholic zeal for what it wanted in numerical strength. Thus we see that if Pitt had been really anxious to eject Mr. Addington from office, by any means short of coalescing with the Whigs, he would have found it no easy task. That he was *not* anxious so to do is the conviction of Lord Stanhope; as it certainly is our own too. But as

time went on, and Pitt could not fail to see that Addington was unequal to his place, while the whole country was demanding his own return to power, he naturally began to consider by what means it might be possible. And then it was that the difficulties of his position first began to make themselves fully manifest. Addington saw that Pitt's return to office was inevitable. But he didn't like the notion of his coming in over his own head. He was afraid it would be said that he was a catspaw. Pitt, however, for reasons which seem to us unanswerable, would only come in as Prime Minister. Addington, again, would have nothing to say to Lord Grenville or Mr. Windham; and Pitt would not return without them. The minister tried in the first place to bring in Mr. Pitt as a co-partner. Pitt treated the bare notion with contempt. Dundas was sent down to Walmer to explain the scheme to him, which was that Pitt and Addington should be joint Secretaries of State, under a nominal chief. Dundas, who knew his man well, waited till the second bottle of port before he approached the subject. But he saw at once that Pitt was impervious to such an overture, and stopped abruptly. "Really," said Mr. Pitt afterwards, "I hadn't the curiosity to ask what I was to be." The second envoy was Mr. Long. He was empowered to state that Addington would waive the premiership, and to propose a meeting between the two statesmen at Bromley-hill, his own seat in Kent. Pitt consented to the meeting, and Mr. Long had the highest hopes of its results. But as he was getting into his chaise the next morning at the gate of Walmer Castle, another carriage drove up, the occupant of which was Lord Grenville.

Long's hopes were now converted into fears—nor, as the issue showed, without reason. Pitt and Addington met upon the 10th of April. Addington expressly excluded Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham from any new arrangement. Pitt declined the responsibility of forming any ministry without them. On this point the negotiations were broken off. And from this time it would appear as if Pitt felt himself absolved from the conditional promise of support which he had originally given to Mr. Addington.

Different opinions have been entertained with regard to the chief actors in this drama. Lord Colchester says that Pitt's conduct was condemned by various influential persons, whose names he gives. But Lord Stanhope says he can find no traces of such a feeling in any of their private letters. The Duke of York said that both parties were in the wrong. Lord Stanhope says, and we think with more justice, that both parties were in the right. Addington could not be expected to associate with men who had been not only opposing but reviling him for the last two years. Pitt might fairly claim the right of bringing in his old colleagues, whose abilities had contributed so much to the splendour of his first administration. This, perhaps, is the fairest way of looking at the question. But were we obliged to choose between them, we should say that Addington was the more completely blameless of the two. In consenting to serve under Mr. Pitt, he had done all that honour or patriotism could require. But Pitt himself, in submitting to the dictation of Lord Grenville, was, as Lord Stanhope reminds us, repeating the mistake of his father in

1765, when he allowed Lord Grenville's uncle to prevent him from a union with the Rockinghams. And the parallel may be pushed further. For as Temple stood aloof from Chatham in 1766, in spite of the deference shown him in the previous year, so did Grenville stand aloof from Pitt in 1804, in spite of the loyalty he had experienced from him in 1803.

These negotiations took place in March and April, 1803. And after the Easter recess, Mr. Pitt resumed his place in Parliament as an independent member. The exact spot on which he sat during this period was long pointed out by ancient members of the House with reverential awe. It was on the right hand of the chair, in the third row from the floor, and in the angle next one of the iron pillars. At this time (May, 1803) Pitt had been a long while absent from Parliament, and when it was known that he was going to speak, on the 23rd, upon the King's Message to Parlialiament, announcing a fresh rupture with France, the excitement of the House of Commons was wound up to the highest pitch. There had been a general election in the previous year, and the House contained nearly two hundred new members who had never heard him speak. As he walked up to his place on that memorable day, with his usual calm and imperial demeanour, loud cries of "Mr. Pitt!" interrupted the speech of Lord Hawkesbury, who with difficulty regained a hearing. Erskine and Whitbread followed; and then Mr. Pitt rose. The speech he delivered on this occasion is ranked by Lord Stanhope as the third among his greatest efforts. Mr. Ward, the father of the present Lord Dudley, described it to his tutor at Oxford

(Dr. Copleston) as not the best of Mr. Pitt's to which he had listened. But circumstances combined to lend it a peculiar interest; and its immediate effects were unparalleled. The applause was renewed three times after he sat down, "in the longest, most eager, and most enthusiastic bursts" which Mr. Ward had ever heard in any place on any occasion. And Mr. Adams, afterwards Pitt's private secretary, quoted to a friend who sat by him, while the orator was speaking, the lines in which Homer describes the return of Achilles, and the eager admiration which he excited among the assembled warriors:

> Studious to see that terror of the plain,
> Long lost to battle, shine in arms again.

Fox's reply on the following night was generally considered to be his masterpiece, and to be, on the whole, superior to Pitt.

We must pass over the earlier events of the ensuing session, which commenced on the 22nd of November, and hasten on to the circumstances which immediately preceded Mr. Pitt's return to power. Mr. Pitt had all along declared that he would give no hostile vote for the express purpose of turning out the ministry; but that no fear of the imputation of motives should debar him from opposing measures which he considered either wrong or inadequate. Acting in this spirit, he felt it his duty in 1804, to oppose certain measures connected with the national defences. Government, on one of these, had a majority as low as 21; at another time they had only 37. In those days such majorities were thought tantamount to defeat; and Addington determined to resign. The King then, through Lord Eldon,

opened communications with Pitt, whom he had not seen for three years, and arrangements were at once commenced for the formation of a new ministry. But here arose the old obstacles. The King would not admit Fox. And Lord Grenville, forgetful of Pitt's behaviour to himself the year before, refused to join without Fox. Innumerable attempts were made to accommodate matters. Fox very generously waived his own claims; but Lord Grenville, with that mixture of pride, perverseness, and egotism which was peculiar to his family, refused to abandon his position, and Pitt formed a ministry without him. Here, as on the Catholic question, Pitt's conduct has been variously construed. Pitt, say one party, ought never to have proposed Fox. Pitt, says Lord Macaulay, ought to have forced the King to take Fox. The arguments by which Lord Stanhope combats these positions are sound and sensible. With regard to the first point, he says, and says truly, that in the face of great national danger coalitions may be permitted which are not allowable at other times. With regard to the second, he urges that it is very doubtful if Pitt *could* have forced the King. He had Addington to fall back upon still. Addington still had a majority; and that majority would have been strengthened by the failure of Pitt to form a ministry.* Those who quote the success of Lord Grenville two years afterwards in forcing Fox upon the King, forget that at this period his Majesty had no one to fall

* See on this point the very interesting letters of Dean Milman to the late Sir G. Lewis, published in his "Administrations of Great Britain, from 1783 to 1830," from which it appears that Addington's Parliamentary strength was much greater than has commonly been supposed.

back upon. Pitt was dead. Addington was in the Upper House. And the party, by their own confession, was for the time completely broken up. But, strong as these reasons are, Lord Stanhope has, in our judgment, overlooked one aspect of the case more important than them all. Pitt was a Tory. But he was a Tory of the Bolingbroke school. His Toryism did not consist in opposing the claims of the Roman Catholics, in resisting the Reform of Parliament, or in any exaggerated horror of "French principles;" on all these points his views were as liberal as need be. But the one cardinal doctrine which removed him further from the Whigs than any difference of opinion on this or that policy could have done, was the right of the sovereign to choose his own ministers. This, as we have before remarked, was the very essence, both the starting point and final cause of Pitt's Toryism. Upon this principle he had come into power in '83; for his support of this principle he had been, beyond any former minister, favoured with the confidence of the King; and now to have turned round in 1804, and have coerced the King's inclinations as it had been the practice to coerce them during the first twenty years of his reign, would have been to apostatise from his creed, to betray his sovereign, and to give the lie to his whole career. It would have been to abandon the very prize which he had wrested from the Whigs in '83; to have replaced George III. in those fetters from which he had been the chosen instrument to deliver him; and to have confessed that the great battle which crowned him with imperishable laurels had been fought for nothing! Lord Macaulay says Pitt should have been "resolute." That is

to say, he should have been a Whig and not a Tory. He should have been a Hardwicke, a Bedford, or a Portland, and not William Pitt.

The above is one of the very few passages in Lord Macaulay's political writings which betrays want of insight into the true character of a crisis. He had clearly forgotten, while contemplating the more immediate points of difference between the Whigs and Tories of that day, the far deeper and more essential line of demarcation by which they were really divided—the ἰδέα, in fact, of Pittite Toryism, which gave the party a distinct *locus standi* in the state, apart from all questions of policy.

Fox himself understood this very well. He had never forgiven Pitt for the rout and ruin of the Whigs during the famous "Mince-pie Administration." That political Waterloo, which doomed the Whigs to fifty years of exile, never ceased to rankle in the mind of the beaten general. To the last he called Pitt a low dog, and a mean rascal. Fox himself was wise enough to know that a junction with Pitt under these circumstances was not much to be desired. And it is ridiculous to expect that Pitt should have been enthusiastic in favour of a man who regarded him, as he probably well knew, with such sentiments as these. Pitt, moreover, while unwilling to let his own feelings stand in the way of a united administration, could not have failed to see that such a coalition as was then proposed contained within itself all the germs of dissolution. He, perhaps, with his keen political instincts, had conîê to understand a truth, which even now is but feebly appreciated among the great body of politicians—namely, that, whatever be the

real reason of it, coalitions *don't work*. We who live in 1862, can point to the only three coalitions which have taken place within the last century as cogent proofs of this assertion. In 1783, in 1806, and in 1853, we had ministries "of all the talents," of which all were shortlived and all ended in disgrace. Under these circumstances Pitt took the wiser course, and we quite agree with his biographer, that if he had lived, his enemies could not have turned him out.

We need not linger over Pitt's last session of Parliament. Though still a powerful minister, he had ceased for a time to be omnipotent within those walls; and the cruellest proof of it was that he could not save his early friend, Lord Melville, from impeachment. The whole account of the gallant fight which Pitt waged in behalf of his old colleague, is given with great spirit by Lord Stanhope; and to him we must refer our readers, for our own space is nearly filled. The rest of the session of 1805 was distinguished by nothing very important. Addington, now Lord Sidmouth, opposed Pitt with all his might. And in the House of Commons his majorities were not more than forty. But he knew, as in '83, that he had the country with him; and with this consciousness his majorities were amply sufficient. Pitt's last Parliament was prorogued on the 31st of July, and the minister went down to Walmer to superintend his gunboats and volunteers.

He continued pretty well in health till the middle of the ensuing winter. On the 9th of November he dined at Guildhall, and made the last speech which he ever delivered in public. It was very short but very much to the purpose.

The Lord Mayor proposed his health as the saviour of Europe. "I return you many thanks for the honour you have done me," said Pitt, "but Europe is not to be saved by any single man. England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, I trust, save Europe by her example." The Duke of Wellington was present at this dinner, and said that nothing could be more perfect.

Some time in December he had some "flying gout," and on his going down to Bath it settled into a regular fit. He was in this condition when he received intelligence of the battle of Austerlitz. Immediately the gout quitted his extremities and settled on a vital part. On the 8th of January, however, he set out from Bath to Putney; but was so weak that the journey took him three days. From this time he lingered till the 23rd, though it was not till quite the last that all hope was given up. He attended seriously to the exhortations of the Bishop of Lincoln; but declined to receive the sacrament on the score of his unworthiness. Prayer, he said, he had neglected so long, that he feared it could be of little use now. But he looked back with satisfaction on the "innocence of his life," and died with calmness and resignation.

The common opinion of Pitt's private character, founded on the libels and caricatures of which a man so eminent must always be the subject, has been greatly modified by the Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope, by Lord Wellesley, by Wilberforce, and finally by his latest biographer, Lord Stanhope. Wraxall's Portraiture of Pitt has been quite blotted out by these authorities. According to Sir Nathaniel, Pitt cared for nothing but politics, and buried himself at

Walmer Castle in 1801 gnawing his heart with vexation at the loss of power, indifferent to all country pleasures, and intent on nothing but how soonest to get back to Downing-street. What is the truth? Pitt, it turns out, was of a most joyous disposition, delighting in literary recreations, and passionately fond of hunting, shooting, and farming. He took a farm near Walmer, to which he and Lady Hester used often to resort for luncheon; and his niece was fond of narrating in after years, what hunches of bread-and-cheese and bread-and-butter she had seen him devour on these occasions. His own letters are full of rural and local topics; they contain frequent mention of his partridge-shooting; and show plainly that he took a deep interest in the inspection of his Cinque Port harbours and discipline of his Cinque Port Volunteers.

To Lord Stanhope's general summary of Pitt's merits as a statesman we can add nothing. His financial and his military policy, which are the two points most frequently singled out for attack, are ably defended by his biographer, and will hereafter, we imagine, stand in need of little justification. But it is not altogether upon these that we would stake the reputation of Pitt. We may admit that he was inferior to his father in these and other elements of statesmanship, without at all dimming the true glory of his career. Chatham may have had a greater genius for war; may have been a more commanding orator; may, at one time, have hushed more completely the voice of opposition in Parliament. But he never for one moment attained to the moral grandeur of his son. He never bore on his shoulders one tithe of the responsibility of Pitt. Intestine

troubles, civil wars, conspiracies, and mutinies were wholly unknown to him. He is a splendid figure in our annals: a more splendid one, possibly, than his son. But he never was, for he never had the chance of being, the one man upon whom, through long years of danger from both foreign and domestic enemies, a nation reposed with confidence; whose removal from power was the signal for general despair; whose restoration revived the public spirit as sunrise renews the daylight; and whose death was lamented by the tears not only of personal friends and political supporters, but of thousands who had never seen him, yet felt themselves reduced to sudden helplessness by the loss of their tried protector. Such a position as this no other man in English history has ever occupied; and this, which is wholly independent of particular measures or combinations, is Pitt's title to immortality.

EDMUND BURKE.

About ten miles from the city of Oxford, and some two or three from the little town of Watlington, on a wide, level space but recently enclosed, and bounded by the rising slopes of the long Chiltern Hills, stands a small and unpretending column. But the stranger, should he inquire the name of the adjoining village, would at once recognise that he stood upon historic ground. The village is Chalgrove, and within a few yards of that unimposing monument Hampden received his mortal wound. This event is recorded on the stone in language of simple and touching dignity; but one sentence is, in our opinion, especially significant. "Here," we are told, "fell John Hampden, fighting for the free monarchy and ancient liberties of England."

Whether it was really for these objects that Hampden died we care not now to inquire, but the words at least show for what the noblemen and gentlemen who erected this memorial believe that he ought to have died—our

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* History of the Life and Times of Edmund Burke. By Thomas Macknight. Vols. i. and ii. London: Chapman and Hall.

ancient liberties and our free monarchy! This we are to accept as the modern Whig construction of the resistance to King Charles I. What then, it may be proper to ask, was our free monarchy, and what were our ancient liberties? If they are to be judged by the causes which produced the Civil War, an answer is not difficult. The liberties were freedom from arbitrary taxation and arbitrary imprisonment; the monarchy was one in which the sovereign was not the representative of a faction. The inscription itself is too terse and well written for us to believe that its composers would have been guilty of a mere sounding piece of tautology; and we may therefore fairly assume that the freedom of the subject did not, in the minds of eminent parliamentary leaders, exclude or seem inconsistent with the freedom of the sovereign. That such still continues to be the theory of the Whig party we are entitled to presume from the opinion recently put forward by an eminent Whig statesman in his essay on Parliamentary Reform. Earl Grey anticipates with gloom the hour when ministers shall be the servants of the House of Commons, and not the servants of the Crown. The spectacle of a government such as George II.'s, in which the King resigned all his authority to the chief of a faction who ruled by the most questionable means, must have roused independent men to think seriously of the condition of the monarchy. Such men must have seen, by the middle of the last century, that if it was not to be destroyed, decisive measures must ere long be adopted to re-invest it with its lawful functions.

With the accession of George III. an opportunity pre-

sented itself. Inveterate evils demand strong remedies. And we doubt if his government went a step farther than might fairly have been expected from the vices of the preceding reigns. The party called the "King's friends" were, after all, only under one name what Lord Grey himself desiderates under another. The class of men whom he wishes to see introduced into Parliament might not inaptly be designated as minister's "friends." Members chosen by no party and pledged only to support the minister would occupy virtually the same position as men pledged only to support the King. Both are equally subject to the indignation of Parliament, since no man can plead the King's command in justification of his conduct. And though we cannot altogether approve of the "King's friends," we regard them as a necessity of the period—exceptional instruments required by a peculiar crisis—an excusable prop to the royal authority while regaining its lawful strength.

The loss of the American colonies during the first twenty years of George III.'s reign proves nothing against the system. It only, indeed, proves that our generals were incompetent. But even if it proved that ministers were wholly in the wrong, that is merely an imputation on their personal incapacity. That they should persevere in a particular policy against so small a minority in Parliament and with so general a support out of doors, does not prove that the King was a tyrant and that they were his tools: and should least of all be reprehended by those who have applauded Sir Robert Walpole for resisting the demands of a much more numerous opposition. If Walpole was right in resisting a large parliamentary minority with the people

against him, Lord North was doubly right in resisting a small parliamentary minority with the people on his own side.

We have intended these remarks as a sort of commentary on that general view of the period which Mr. Macknight seems to take by our author. It is, indeed, true that the lapse of sixty years since any King of England had been permitted to have a will of his own, at all events in domestic politics, might well have imparted to the early struggles of George III. the air of unconstitutional innovations. It is impossible to lay down any rule with regard to the length of time which is required to bar the right of appeal to the letter of the constitution. We ourselves hold that the revival of monarchical authority effected by George III. was justifiable in principle, and beneficial in its consequences. Burke and the Whigs had brought themselves to think differently, and certainly this, if any, is a question on which honest differences of opinion might well exist both then and now.

We have now to consider a little more in detail Burke's claims to the title of a statesman and an orator, and his relations with his own party. And first on the subject of his American policy—for the measures of the Rockingham cabinet were virtually his — it is, to say the least of it, open to doubt whether Lord Chatham was not quite right in his reprobation of the Declaratory Act. That act, as our readers may remember, was passed during the short Administration of Lord Rockingham in 1766. The gist of it was to affirm that the King and Parliament of this country possessed the indefeasible right of taxing the British colonies. The Ministry

did not intend to carry it into effect; but it was thought that with the repeal of the Stamp Act, another of Lord Rockingham's measures, it was desirable to couple some express reservations of the imperial right. Now, it appears to us that this measure was likely to sink deeper into the minds of the Americans than even a vigorous enforcement of the obnoxious impost. Thoughtful men would be alarmed by its very moderation. They would feel that it was not an emanation of passion or tyranny, but the calm assertion of a principle by liberal and patriotic statesmen, from which they would never be likely to recede, and which *à fortiori* would always be supported by the country. If not acted upon now it would always constitute an invincible precedent against them, and they would be far more likely to attribute its inactivity to want of preparation for enforcing it than to any sentiment of clemency towards themselves. They would thus be supplied with two distinct motives for a determined resistance—one the certainty that generations must now elapse before their immunity could be peacefully secured, the other the suspicion that the present moment was as favourable for a trial of arms as was ever likely to present itself. Nor was Burke's reply to his great antagonist of less dubious soundness than the expediency of the act itself. We cannot, said Lord Chatham, tax those who are not represented. Neither, said Burke, are nine-tenths of the British people represented. Now this is an argument which might pass muster in debate, but will hardly stand the test of reason. Quite a sufficient number of tax-payers are represented in this country to protect the common interests. But we should rather say

that in Chatham's sense of the word the whole nation is represented, and that Burke's argument rests only on the dexterously equivocal use of a technical term. He replied to an opponent who used it of classes, by using it of numbers—an application of the word he would have been the first to repudiate in his cooler moments.

On the subject of Burke's oratory we cannot say that Mr. Macknight tires us, because he "goes on refining." All his hero's efforts are on an equally grand scale; superlative adjectives are applied to every speech in succession, and a better collection of English synonyms could be made out of these two volumes than almost any other work we know of equal bulk. He is never tired of insisting upon Burke's wit, which, he tells us, Dr. Johnson questioned. But, though it cannot be denied that Burke had great wit of a certain kind (witness his famous pun upon Wilkes, not recorded by Mr. Macknight), we should doubt if it was of that sort which set the House of Commons in a roar. Certainly the specimens which Mr. Macknight has selected are not the most convincing in the world. On the other hand, he is too apt to depreciate Burke's opponents, of which the following passage is a specimen:

But even on this night Burke, as usual, had his foil. Wedderburne undertook to defend Grenville, whom, in his opinion, the orator had unjustly aspersed in the character he had given in the course of the speech. Some men, it seemed, said the Solicitor-General, wishing to be very severe, were born for government, but Mr. Grenville had been, from what they had heard, particularly unfortunate. His mind had been contracted by the two circumstances of having been bred to a profession, and after he had completed his studies, of having been immediately immersed in the business of office. From the law he had

acquired some evil habits and prejudices unknown to those who were happily ignorant under what form of government they lived; and from his initiation into office he had not had the advantages of entering into the fashionable clubs, but had acquired an early intimacy with the first men of the age. "Such, sir," said the Solicitor-General, sneering, as he thought triumphantly, at Burke, "were the disqualifications under which Mr. Grenville was called forth to the first situations in Administration at a time when ancient prejudices were still respected, and before it was understood that parts were spoiled by application, that ignorance was preferable to knowledge, and that any lively man of imagination and fancy, without practice in office, and without experience, might start up at once a self-taught minister, and undertake the management of a great country in difficult times." This retort was considered very clever and happy.

The reply, undoubtedly, *was* very happy. If nothing but Burke's parliamentary performances had come down to us, what would have been his reputation—if there had been no Thoughts on the Present Discontents, no Reflections on the French Revolution, no Bristol Letter, no Literary Club to listen to his conversation, no Johnson to attest his colloquial eminence? Burke's nature, in fact, was a strange medley of the practical and the unpractical. In conduct he was shrewd and business-like. His efforts to keep his friends together were untiring, nor did he disdain any of those party stratagems which the custom of statesmen sanctions. But the moment he rose upon his legs, his practical talent became a slave to his buoyant intellect. The deep thinker could not force himself to contemplate only the division list. The political philosopher could not resist generalisations. His genius burst from its moorings, and, when he should have been battering a mud-fort, carried him half round the world on a voyage of discovery. Sometimes an occasion presented itself when this kind of

oratory was suitable. Then the effect which he produced was prodigious. But in the ordinary business of Parliament it was felt that coarser instruments were wanted.

Burke's relation to the Bedford Whigs, after the death of Lord Rockingham, was not unlike that of Cicero to Pompey, to Brutus, and to Cato. In each case was a great party claiming to be the only lawful representative of the old popular patricians whose statesmanship had saved the Commonwealth; who, in process of time, perhaps deliberately, and perhaps unconsciously, had accumulated in their own hands all those privileges which they had professed to confer upon the nation; who still identified themselves with the cause of the constitution, and their opponents with the cause of despotism; and who called on all the admirers of the ancient Roman policy to rally round its hereditary defenders. In each case, too, was a young and enthusiastic admirer of the good old cause, who by the sheer force of his genius had at once assumed a foremost place among the leading men of the day; who boldly rebuked the corruption which reigned around him—and in doing so raised the secret dislike even of those whom he so ably supported. And in each case the result was analagous; for while the Roman statesman paid for his patriotism with his life, the English one was spared only to witness the ruin of his professional hopes and the wreck of his political connexions. In Rome, however, public virtue was dead; in England it merely slept. But how like are the two figures, and how like even are all the accessories!

Mr. Burke's treatment by the Whigs has been a favourite theme of invective with their enemies. Yet the same class of men who kept Burke down among the Whigs would

not improbably have tried to keep him down among the Tories. But they had not the same power. The strength of the Whig party lay in the great patrician magnates, of whom the country gentlemen were, and still are, notoriously jealous. The Tory leaders, whether for good or for evil, have always been dependent on the country gentlemen; have been compelled to defer to their prejudices; and to look for colleagues outside of that oligarchic circle which the bulk of their supporters do not love. Still the fact of Whig exclusiveness remains; and, no doubt, to some extent, the subject of this notice was its victim. There may be some force in the reasons assigned by M. de Remusat for Burke's exclusion from the Cabinet of 1782.' He was accused of conducting the opposition with too much violence. He neglected to consult or to concert measures with his colleagues, and he "acted under the dominion of thoughts formed by meditation and study." His oratory, refined by his literature, was "more fitted to adorn a party than to serve it, and did not satisfy the daily exigencies of debate." "He troubled himself too little about the dispositions of his enemies or his friends; he knew nothing of the management of men; and it is fair to conjecture that he neither ought to have been, nor wished to be, a minister." But for all that, we adhere to the opinions we have expressed elsewhere in these essays. Had Burke been better treated, he would have been more docile, tractable, and temperate.

Burke's literary tone of mind was injurious to his political prospects, because it inevitably made him what men of action call crotchety. When this fatal sentence has once been pronounced upon any English statesman, farewell to his political advancement. Students and thinkers may

know well enough that the epithet very frequently stands for nothing more than a dislike of expediency. But your practical man knows, what the student perhaps is incapable of appreciating, that the statesman whose business it is to act in concert with numbers, ought not to have a different rule of action from theirs. Now the reflective and collative habit of mind by which essentials are abstracted from accidents, and secondary differences and resemblances made light of, will never be readily understood by a popular assembly. These same secondary points are their watchwords, and they cannot get behind them. The man who does so may in reality be but placing their own opinions upon deeper and surer foundations. But the chances are a hundred to one they will not recognise his consanguinity. Burke's opposition was grounded on the purest and most primitive Whig principles—the love of constitutional monarchy. For what says M. de Remusat? "The Bill of Rights had nothing of the aggressive and innovating character which marks many of the declaratory acts of a revolution. Far from abolishing ancient privileges, it re-endowed them with fresh vigour." Fox, forgetful or careless of the true Whig theory, looked only to the accidents of the position, and acted as if resistance to Toryism was its cardinal element. This grand mistake led to the exclusion of his party from office for nearly half a century, but it made him their recognised and trusted leader; while Burke, who pointed reproachfully to the principles of 1688, was denounced as a renegade, and sneered at as pedantic and crotchety.

It would be unfair perhaps to the Whigs not to admit that Burke had in some measure brought this treatment

on himself. His behaviour during the North administration was marked by some of the very same errors which afterwards misled Fox. As has been very well pointed out by a recent historian of the period,* Burke's celebrated picture of the king's friends is monstrously exaggerated and distorted. Here we must believe that he himself took an accident for an essential. Parliament, after all, was not made for the sake of party, but party for the sake of Parliament. No doubt, as a rule, the existence of two large and well-defined parties among the representatives of the people supplies the best machinery for government; but still if Parliamentary government without party *was* possible, it will hardly be denied that it would be preferable. Burke was afraid that the discouragement of party would give too much power to the crown, just as Bolingbroke had feared that the encouragement of party would give too much power to the minister. Both were equally mistaken. They saw not that a power was gradually springing up to make either consummation impossible. Yet Bolingbroke might have discerned the signs of the times in the resistance to Walpole's Excise Bill; and Burke should have seen that the king's reassertion of prerogative was only respectable while it was supported by public opinion, and was powerless without its endorsement. This, however, Burke did not see; he persisted in talking as if the language of the first Whigs was still applicable to public affairs, and though the first symptoms of the French Revolution apprised him of his error, he had given his party a Republican creed which

* Mr. Massey.

they declined to abandon with him. The invectives against the power of the Crown contained in his earlier speeches had nourished a spirit which he now found it difficult to exorcise. His own remarks, too, upon party obligations, though expressing an important practical truth, unhappily turned out ill for him at that particular moment. Burke had almost taught that the first duty of a statesman was to stick to his party. If he did not mean this himself, his language was calculated to make many people suppose that he did mean it. "Party," said he, "is a body of men "united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national "interest upon some particular principle in which they are "all agreed. For my part, I find it impossible to conceive "that any one believes in his own politics or thinks them of "any weight who refuses to adopt the means of having them "reduced into practice. It is the business of the speculative "philosopher to mark the proper ends of government. It is "the business of the politician, who is the philosopher in "action, to find out proper means towards those ends, and to "employ them with effect. Therefore, every honourable con- "nexion will avow it is their first purpose to pursue every "just method to put the men who hold these opinions into "such a condition as may enable them to carry their common "plans into execution with all the power and authority of "the state. As this power is attached to certain situations, "it is their duty to contend for those situations. Without a "proscription of others, they are bound to give to their own "party the preference in all things, and by no means, for "private considerations, to accept any offers of power in which "the whole body is not included, nor to suffer themselves

"to be led, or controlled, or to be overbalanced, in office "or in council, by those who contradict the very fundamental "principles on which their party is formed, and even those "upon which every fair connexion must stand. . . . . When "people desert their connexions, the desertion is a manifest "fact, upon which a direct simple issue lies, triable by plain "men. Whether a measure of government be right or wrong "is no matter of fact, but a mere affair of opinion, on which "men may, as they do, dispute and wrangle without end."

It is easy to see that these opinions, committed to the press in 1770, might have been turned against Burke with fatal effect in 1790. It is quite true that as we look back upon the period we see plainly that Burke was only true to the traditional principles of his party. But in the excitement and confusion of the moment, when the tendency of things was still doubtful, we can readily understand that it might have been asked with some propriety why one man's interpretation of Whig principles was to override the whole body of the Whigs. It did so happen on this particular occasion that the one man was right. But it required all the strength of conviction with which he clung to his opinions to justify the violation of a maxim which twenty years before he had so vigorously enforced upon his colleagues; and we cannot wonder that those to whom his "desertion was a manifest fact," and his convictions "a mere affair of opinion," should not have regarded his conduct in the same light as posterity has done. It is to posterity that such men must look. Burke, it is true, gave an additional topic to his detractors by his acceptance of a pension; but a later generation has viewed this circum-

stance indulgently, nor on the whole has it been thought to have either diminished the splendour or soiled the purity of his famous and honourable career.

Burke's change of party in the last ten years of his life is characteristically attributed by Mr. Buckle to mental derangement. There is a mixture of ingenuity and simplicity about this solution of an embarrassing phenomenon that really commands our admiration. There is an old circuit story of a counsel who was defending a prisoner from a charge of stealing a sack of potatoes. A witness alleged that the sack was contained in a certain cart which had passed him on the highroad. The case was so clear against the thief that his advocate was reduced to despair. At last a happy thought struck him. How many pigs, he asked of the witness aforesaid, were there in the cart? The witness stared in astonishment—he had seen no pigs. That was sufficient for the orator's purpose. How could the jury trust the narrative of a witness who had walked alongside a cart with several pigs in it, and had not seen one of them? It was clear that the man was either a fool or a liar. It is needless to say that the fact of the pigs being in the cart at all was a pure assumption of the advocate; but it so confounded the witness and so took the jury by surprise, that the ingenious gentleman was rewarded by the acquittal of the prisoner. Now, what the pigs were to the champion of the thief, that is Burke's madness to the champion of the French Revolution. Of any evidence to support this assumption, we make bold to say there is not one jot nor one tittle. We rather regret that Mr. Macknight has not deliberately taken up this

charge, and exposed the flimsy attempts at proof upon which it is defended. Mr. Buckle grounds it entirely upon the violence of his writings after 1788, upon one description given of him by Dr. Currie, and upon one letter which Burke wrote to Dr. Laurence. Now, as to the first argument, that is a mere begging of the question. The mere violence of his writings was no proof of madness, if the object of that violence deserved it. That is the point to be proved. But if it be argued that the *quality* of the violence be such as to prove the decay of Burke's powers, we point to other writings contemporaneous with his invectives against the French Revolution as incontestible evidence that his powers were then in their zenith. The "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs," and the "Letter to a Noble Lord," are undoubtedly among the finest of all Burke's productions. Both were written after the outbreak of the French Revolution, and one even after the death of his son. The language of Dr. Currie is not such as to warrant the assertion that Burke was mad. Naturally of an irritable disposition, Burke had become soured by the unhappy issue of his political connexions; while he viewed the conduct of the French with the agitation natural to age. These combined causes of perturbation might no doubt have communicated an abruptness to his manners and an occasional incoherence to his language which would surprise those who were not familiar with his character. But this is not madness. The accusation, indeed, scarcely requires any serious answer. But readers of the present volume will meet with numberless quotations from his correspondence and numberless examples of his conduct, even up to

the last few days of his life, which abundantly refute the calumny. Are these, for instance, the words of a madman? Burke is speaking of Canning (1796), who had found some fault with Burke's strictures upon Pitt:

> Tell Mr. Canning that I am very much flattered in finding that a man of his genius and his virtue finds anything to tolerate in my feeble and belated endeavours to be useful, at a crisis of the world which calls for all the efforts of a rich mind like his, in the full vigour of all his mental and of all his bodily powers; but I am soothed in seeing that I continue the object of his early partiality. If I have written with any personal asperity to Mr. Pitt, it was very unwise and very unbecoming, and, I am sure, very contrary to my intentions; but having the misfortune of not being able to bring my mind up to the value of the measures that have been pursued, it was impossible that I should speak of them without the most marked concern, and without a strong feeling of the ill effects which had resulted from the system which had been adopted, and is persevered in. Perhaps it were better I had never written at all—but I had this to say, or nothing.

Of Burke in private life there is no tradition which is not favourable. He was at once affectionate and cheerful, humane, charitable, and virtuous. He was passionately attached to his wife and children. He was the warmest and most constant of friends, and the protector of those who had none. He loved the genial occupations of country life, and sustained well the character of a gentleman farmer. He would, doubtless, have been a far happier man had he never changed literature for politics, had Berkeley been his antagonist instead of North, and had he devoted that genius to establishing the existence of matter which was wasted in demolishing a minister. But England would have lost, we will not say her greatest political, but her greatest parliamentary philosopher; while literature, perhaps, would have

gained nothing equal to some of his political tracts and the "Reflections on the French Revolution."

Burke at Beaconsfield is a picture on which we have always loved to dwell. He was, indeed, the father of his people in a better sense than Charles II. The agricultural labourers on his estate felt the effects of his benevolence in improved cottages, Christmas charities, and that kind and solicitous smile with which he never failed to greet them when abroad upon his farm. Their families were doctored from his own medicine-chest; and a few old people still survive who took pills and potions from his hands. He was equally anxious for their amusement as for their comfort. Not a band of strolling-players passed through Beaconsfield but received an invitation to the hall, and free permission given to exhibit their performances on his lawn, or in his great barn, according to the season and the nature of the entertainment. On these occasions Burke entered into all the details of the fun with the utmost enthusiasm —arranged costumes for his visitors from his own and Mrs. Burke's wardrobe, and once stole a pair of buckskins from a guest to deck the hero of the evening. The hilarity and family affection of the Beaconsfield circle reminds us of another happy household, the centre of as brilliant a genius, and destined to as sad a close. In reading the pages of our author which relate to these domestic scenes, we might almost imagine that we had before us the volumes of Mr. Lockhart.

But few traces of the great statesman's residence are now remaining. The house was destroyed by fire many years ago. The garden has gone to waste; the orchard

has been rooted up; and the gates have been torn off their hinges. But the cattle still drink at the well which supplied Burke's household, and the farm-horses are still stabled in the stalls where Wyndham used to hang his bridle. The grove in which the owner of the house possessed his favourite walk has not been cut down, though all vestiges of the path have disappeared. But the pilgrim may still stand under the trees which delighted Johnson, and imagine for himself the conversations to which they used to listen of Goldsmith and Reynolds, of Fox and Pitt, of the Reign of Terror, and the Queen of France.

In London, Burke lived in a thoroughly unpretending manner. He usually rented a small house for the season; and latterly in Duke-street, St. James's. Here his entertainments were of the simplest description. His table was supplied from his own farm, on which his four carriage-horses worked when their master was away, for Burke kept no carriage when in town. He never disguised the fact that his pecuniary resources were for a man in his position very limited. And it is greatly to his credit that, such being the case, he availed himself of none of those opportunities of growing rich which were at that time open to any politician of his powers. He had from first to last about thirty thousand pounds from Lord Rockingham; and he was twice, for very brief periods each time, Paymaster of the Forces. But considering that he gave up a profession to devote himself to his political friends—and that this thirty thousand pounds covers a period of about thirty years during which Burke was obliged to live, we cannot think his emoluments were at all disproportioned to his services.

Of the merits of Burke's writings, Mr. Macknight says but little. A lengthened critique of them would be out of place on this occasion. But we may say that in our opinion it is not by those which are best known that Burke can be most fairly judged. The same fact is to be noticed of many other authors. Pope is best known by his "Homer," and his "Essay upon Man." Bolingbroke by his "Patriot King." Johnson by the "Rambler" and the "Idler." But all three wrote far better things than any one of these. Burke's political essays, which are now comparatively little read, are, as specimens of vigorous English, superior to the Reflections, which form his most popular production. His observations on Party, his Appeal, and his letters to the Duke of Bedford, show him in our opinion in a much higher light than his famous sketch of Marie Antoinette. Political writers of the present day would do well to study the style of these essays, which are forcible without being spasmodic, easy without being flippant, and pure without being formal.

THE GRENVILLES, 1861.*

THE second Duke of Buckingham, who died in July last, was described in the columns of *The Times* as the head of that house, "which has given more statesmen to the nation than any other in the land: First Lords of the Admiralty, First Lords of the Treasury, Chancellors of the Exchequer, Secretaries of State, without number." The history of such a family is part of the history of England; and it so happens that a complete history of this family, from the time when it first began to take part in public affairs, exists in the series of publications which, emanating chiefly from the late Duke, record its relations with the Government of this country during four generations, and cover almost the space of a century and a quarter. "The Grenville Papers," edited by Mr. Smith, carry us back to the year 1742; and the "Court and Cabinets of William IV. and Queen Victoria," the last work of the late Duke, brings us down to the year 1858. Between these two we have memoirs of the reign of George III., of the Regency, and

* Private Diary of Richard, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, K.G. 3 vols. Hurst and Blackett.

of the reign of George IV.; the gap in which, created by the Duke's absence from England during the two years immediately succeeding the death of Mr. Canning, is filled up by the volumes now before us, which thus supply the last link in the history of this famous house.

On the north-west border of the county of Buckingham, where the range of the Chilterns terminates in one or two detached eminences, the Vale of Aylesbury narrows itself into a tongue of land, between Brill Hill upon the south, and the Quainton Hills upon the north. South of Brill Hill, and stretching right up to the village perched upon its summit, lay in former times the royal forest of Bernwood, of which some fragments yet remain clustered round the old tower of Boarstall. North-eastward of Brill the ground dips abruptly into the narrowest part of the Vale of Aylesbury, and nestling close under this protecting eminence lies the village of Wootton-under-Wood, or, more correctly speaking, under Bernwood. In this sheltered retreat the house of Grenville established itself at a very early period of our history. The manor of Wootton formed but a small portion of the vast possessions granted by William the Conqueror to Giffard, Earl of Buckingham. And one of his sub-feudatories, if the confused records of those early times can be relied on, was the founder of the house of Grenville. One Richard de Grenville, or Granville, is said to have come over with the Conqueror. A Sir Eustace de Grenville is said to have married Isabel, daughter of the second Earl of Buckingham, and to have received the manor of Wootton as her marriage portion. But though the means by which the family came into pos-

session of the estate are variously described, there seems to be no doubt that a Grenville was really seated at Wootton as early as the reign of King John, and that from him the present Duke of Buckingham is a descendant in the male line. The Grenvilles were a quiet race; one dynasty of Buckinghams succeeded another: Giffards, Staffords, and Villierses, came and went, but the Grenvilles were still at Wootton. They were, and long continued to be, second-rate gentry; wealthy and strong enough to take deep root in the soil, but not big enough to be ambitious. They present, in fact, the curious spectacle of a family planted on the same estate, and keeping up the male succession for six hundred years, without producing one great man. They never rose into the ranks of those great potentates who gave and took away crowns, and owned those vast domains of which our modern estates are but fragments. No Grenville appears in the list of sheriffs before the reign of Charles I.; no Grenville represented his county in Parliament before the reign of Charles II. During the usurpation, a Grenville who had served under Cromwell attained to that honour; but after that period they again relapsed into obscurity. They played for none of those great stakes which were so freely contested under the Plantagenets, the Tudors, and the Stuarts. The only enterprising man of the family seems to have been one Edward Grenville, who commanded the ship *Swallow*, under Sir Francis Drake, and died at Carthagena. But the Grenvilles were biding their time; an era was approaching more adapted to their peculiar talents than the stormy periods of civil war and feudalism; and by a fortunate alliance which they

contracted in the eighteenth century, they stepped at once into the position of a leading family in the country.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century a member of the old Leicestershire family of Temple became possessed of the manor of Stowe, a property lying in the extreme north-west corner of Buckinghamshire, and closely bordering on Northamptonshire. The Temples of Stowe at once became distinguished. They appear among the sheriffs and knights of the shire much earlier in the seventeenth century than the Grenvilles. Subsequently they produced the great Sir William Temple, whose younger brother was the ancestor of the present Lord Palmerston. But the main stock was represented in the reign of William III. by Sir Richard Temple of Stowe. His son entered the army, served with distinction under Marlborough, and was finally created Viscount Cobham; the same Cobham to whom Pope addressed his "Epistle upon the Characters of Men." The peerage had been given him with remainder to his sister Esther, who, at his decease in 1749, became Viscountess Cobham. She was the wife of Richard Grenville, of Wootton; and on her accession to her brother's honours, she was further created Countess Temple in her own right. By her husband, Richard Grenville, to whom she brought the Stowe estates, this lady had three children: the eldest, Richard, became Earl Temple; the second, George, was the Prime Minister who passed the Stamp Act; the daughter, Hester, became the wife of William Pitt, afterwards created Earl of Chatham.

Temple, succeeding to the title in 1752, found himself master of one of the finest estates in England, of con-

siderable parliamentary influence, and allied by marriage to the first statesman of the day. From this date the grandeur of the House of Grenville takes its rise. Though the family professed Whig principles, it was not a member of the Great Revolution confederacy; and seems always to have been inspired by a certain jealousy of the Whig magnates, who regarded office as their birthright. To establish a position for themselves, independent of this powerful connexion, and worthy of their own rank and influence, became now a paramount object with the House of Grenville. By the aid of their illustrious relative, and their own unquestionable capacity, they effected this object for a time; and when the curtain draws up on the accession of George III., we find the representatives of Whig principles divided into three bodies, of which the Grenvilles were by no means the least powerful.

Of these three, the oldest and the strongest consisted of a certain number of great families, who acknowledged the Duke of Newcastle as their head. The Cavendishes, the Seymours, the Lennoxes, the Bentincks, the Mannerses, the Conways, and the Wentworths, were the leading men of this connexion. A second party belonged to the Duke of Bedford, whose proper place, indeed, was in the ranks above mentioned, but who had been misled, by personal ambition and the flattery of parasites, into forming a connexion of his own. This was the weakest of the three, and the unprincipled character of its chief component members had drawn upon it the well-known *sobriquet* of "The Bloomsbury Gang." The third connexion was the Grenvilles. It was the existence of these divisions among

the Whig party, on his accession to the throne, which enabled George III. effectually to resuscitate Toryism, and to form a united and compact party, capable, in the long-run, of setting the Whig houses at defiance.

The Grenvilles, however, had completely attained their object. They had become a power in the State; able, by a junction with the Bedfords, to overrule the Pelhams, or, by a junction with the Tories, to overrule both. This was the game they played during the first ten years of George III.'s reign; and, *mutatis mutandis*, it is the game which they continued to play till the old system of Government was finally extinguished by the Reform Bill. The Grenvilles, indeed, began their political career on principles more worthy of our respect than any which prevailed at that epoch. They were attached to Parliamentary Government, and to all the other guarantees for liberty which were secured at the Revolution. But they had no sympathy with the great confederacy of "Revolution Families," which had been omnipotent under the two first Georges, and which had now degenerated into a selfish and arbitrary oligarchy. They heartily supported Mr. Pitt in his first glorious administration, not more perhaps because he was their relative than because he was the rival of "the Families." So far their views had been productive of unmixed good to the community. But with the accession of George III. a new field was opened to their ambition, which they turned to account, as we have stated. As their antagonism to the Newcastle connexion made them more acceptable to the king than any other branch of the Whig party, they aspired to hold the balance between the re-

mainder of the Whigs and the Tories, and to make themselves necessary to the Crown, whichever of the two might be in office. We see this system in operation during the ministry of George Grenville; we see it in the refusal of the two brothers to join Mr. Pitt in 1766; we see it in the conduct of Lord Temple in 1783; we see it in the desertion of Mr. Pitt by Lord Grenville in 1804; and we see it in the behaviour of the family on various political emergencies in the Regency and the reign of George IV. It is gratifying to know, however, that their policy was only partially successful. It prevailed against the King on some occasions, and it bored him on others, though once or twice it served his turn. It wrung bursts of indignation from both Chatham and his illustrious son. But it ultimately recoiled upon its authors; and we see the result in the sullen and discontented effusions which the writer of the "Diary" now before us used to issue from his retreat at Stowe, and in his futile efforts to regain the old ascendency of his house.

The two brothers, Richard Grenville, Earl Temple, and the Right Hon. George Grenville, were the two pillars of the house during the latter part of George II.'s reign, and the first twenty years of George III.'s. The younger brother began official life in 1744, as a Junior Lord of the Admiralty; to which office was added, three years afterwards, a Lordship of the Treasury. He seems to have held these posts till the death of Mr. Pelham, in 1754, broke up the ministry, when he became Treasurer of the Navy in the short-lived administration of the Duke of Devonshire. He retained this post, with certain intervals,

throughout the ministry which succeeded under the nominal guidance of the Duke of Newcastle. He became Secretary of State under Newcastle's successor, Lord Bute; and finally became himself First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1763.

The Grenville administration was simply the best bargain which the King could make. Upon one point he was determined—if he could not have a pure Tory administration, he would not have a pure Whig one. The Newcastle connexion he would *not* take back. The Bute government had become impossible: so he was driven to fall back upon the Grenvilles, who, if they did not favour his own high notions of prerogative, would not, he thought, treat him as the Whigs had treated his grandfather. He was, however, doomed to disappointment. Pitt and Lord Temple, who had quarrelled with his brother George for remaining in office after the resignation of Newcastle, stood aloof from the new administration, afraid, it is supposed, of the secret influence of Lord Bute. And thus "the three brothers," as they were called, lost the chance of forming a strong and independent administration, which, three years afterwards, Lord Temple strove vainly to re-establish. Under these circumstances Grenville had no choice. The "Bloomsbury Gang" were open to a good offer; and the Duke of Bedford and his men gave their support to the new government. But the King soon found that his position was more intolerable than ever. Grenville was an excellent man of business, but he was obstinate, pedantic, and prosy. The Duke of Bedford, though he chose to stand alone, had all the arrogance of the old Whig connexion. Between the

wearisome harangues of the one, and the curt insolence of the other, his Majesty led a hard life. Their exclusion of his mother from the Regency Bill, and the dictatorial tone which they assumed towards him with regard to his private friends, were inexcusable; and, as far as we know, not a single political writer has ventured to excuse them. After nearly two years of this thraldom, his Majesty appealed to Mr. Pitt; this time Mr. Pitt was ready to come forward, but Lord Temple interfered to prevent him. He saw, as he thought, that prospect of a pure Pitt and Grenville administration, which had danced before his eyes in 1763, and he would not consent to sacrifice it by an alliance with the party of Lord Rockingham, which was the scheme now in contemplation. Let the King see that the House of Grenville had it in its power to prevent any combination which displeased them, and he must ultimately consent to take them upon their own terms. Pitt reluctantly gave way: exclaiming as he did so,

> Exstinxti me teque, soror, populumque patresque
> Sidonios, urbemque tuam——

The King struggled on for a brief while longer, and then, in despair, had recourse to the Marquis of Rockingham. Grenville was dismissed in July, 1765, and from that time to his death, in 1770, he never again returned to office. His administration will chiefly be remembered by the notorious Stamp Act, the real source of our rupture with America. But he passed another measure also, when merely a private member of the House, that is, in 1770, which does far more honour to his memory; this was a Bill for regulating the Proceedings of the House of Commons on

Controverted Elections, which has been highly praised by competent authorities, and is still the law of the land. An Election Bill, in fact, was just the kind of thing which Grenville was competent to understand, as the government of a great colonial empire was precisely the thing which he was not.

Lord Temple's first employment in public affairs was under the Duke of Newcastle, in 1756, when he was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty. He exchanged this office for that of Lord Privy Seal in the year following; and in this situation he continued till 1761, when he resigned, as we have seen, in company with Newcastle and Mr. Pitt. He was not reconciled to his brother till the latter had retired from office, in 1765, when their former cordiality was restored, and they became united in a common design for the aggrandisement of their own house.

The Rockingham ministry never had a chance of permanence. The Grenvilles opposed it on the repeal of the Stamp Act, and Pitt opposed it on the passage of the Declaratory Act. Although, however, both these measures were passed, they do not seem to have strengthened the hands of government; and in the summer of 1766 the Marquis of Rockingham retired. Again the King sent for Mr. Pitt; again it appeared that the best chance of a durable administration lay in an alliance with the Whigs; and again Lord Temple was intractable. In vain the office of First Minister was offered to him, with the appointment of Chancellor of the Exchequer and all the lordships of the Treasury. He said he would not come in to be a cipher; he would not be a Premier surrounded by the personal

adherents of Mr. Pitt, and the Whig relics of Lord Rockingham. His brother George had generously consented to waive his claims altogether: in return for that concession he had a right to name half the Cabinet. Pitt laughed in his face; and the Earl returned to Stowe, "to get," as he said, "a little sleep, and rise very happy in the morning;" but in reality to devise new schemes for avenging the insulted House of Grenville.

The Earl had overshot the mark. With the help of the young Duke of Grafton, some of the friends of Lord Rockingham, and some of the older Whig party, Pitt patched up an administration, which, under all the disadvantages of his own ill health, and the violent attacks of Junius, lasted longer than any government which George III. had yet seen, and bade the House of Grenville do its worst. It has been said, indeed, that Temple in his wrath was the dictator of the letters of Junius, if not the author. But although this hypothesis is rejected by the best authorities, it was for many years a prevalent belief that the Grenvilles were in possession of the secret, and had had transactions with the writer; a circumstance clearly showing what manner of man Lord Temple was esteemed by his contemporaries, and how deeply his vanity had been wounded by the failure of his final effort.

The eventual establishment of a settled Tory government under Lord North, the death of George Grenville, and the death of Lord Chatham, which all occurred within a short time of one another, conclude the first epoch in the history of the Grenvilles. The second begins with the overthrow

of Lord North's government in 1782, and the appearance of a new generation upon the theatre of public life.

Lord Temple had no sons; but his brother, who married a daughter of Sir William Wyndham, had a large family, of which George, the eldest son, was the second Lord Temple; and William Wyndham Grenville, the third, was the well-known statesman and scholar, better known as Lord Grenville. The second Lord Temple and Lord Grenville are to the later part of George III.'s reign what the first Lord Temple and George Grenville were to the earlier; and though they played together a part very different in its details and even its political principles, we can easily detect the same family characteristics running through their whole career.

When these two young men began to turn their thoughts towards public life, the war between the King and the Whigs, which had been terminated twelve years before by the ascendancy of Lord North, was on the eve of breaking out again with redoubled fury. But during the interval times had greatly changed, and the first Lord Temple, who survived till 1779, was probably changing with them. He had retired from public life, and would be watching the progress of events, and the gradual change of public opinion, with a calm and disinterested eye; and to whatever point his reflections tended, we may be sure that his nephew and heir, in whose society he took great delight, had the full benefit of them. An interesting picture is still preserved to us of the old man three years before his death, as he appeared to the assembled guests at Gosfield Hall, in Essex,

the seat of Lord Nugent, whose daughter young Grenville had married:

"In his person he was tall and large, though not inclined to corpulency. A disorder, the seat of which lay in his ribs, bending him almost double, compelled him in walking to make use of a sort of crutch; but his mind seemed exempt from any decay. His conversation was animated, brilliant, and full of entertainment. Notwithstanding the nickname of Lord Gawky, which he had obtained in the satirical or party productions of those times, and which we may presume was not given him without good reason, he had nevertheless the air and appearance of a man of high condition when he appeared with the insignia and decorations of the Garter seated at table."*

The editor of the Grenville Papers found among the Nugent Papers a rather caricature-like sketch of him by his daughter-in-law, Lady Mary. He is standing in an oratorical attitude, and the highly characteristic words, "I am come, sir, to express my highest indignation and contempt," &c., are represented as proceeding from his mouth.

When a Tory, or rather anti-Whig, administration was formed in 1782 upon the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, the young Lord Temple, at that time in his thirtieth year, was appointed to the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. The resignation of Lord Shelburne in the following February was shortly followed by that of Lord Temple; and from this period, for more than twenty years, the

* Wraxall.

House of Grenville remained steadily Tory. The first indication of the change which the family politics had undergone, was the part played by Lord Temple in the ejection of the Portland ministry, which, much to the King's disgust, had been forced upon him by the old Whigs. Not the most obsequious of "the King's friends," Lord Bute or Lord Gower, could have performed a more delicate piece of secret service than he performed on this occasion. His Majesty and his faithful servant took counsel together how best to get rid of the unpopular India Bill and the obnoxious ministry at a single stroke. Government had a commanding majority in the House of Commons. If events were allowed to take their course, the Bill would probably pass also in the Lords; his Majesty would then have no choice but to submit to a curtailment of prerogative, or to refuse his assent to the Bill. The first, of course, was not to be thought of; the second was a very strong measure. Could no middle course be struck out? Whether the King was indebted to the inventive powers of Lord Temple, or to his own strategical ability, for the device that was ultimately adopted, we cannot say, but it was carried into effect by his lordship. For some nights before the division was to take place in the House of Lords, Temple hung about the clubs and lobbies with a small slip of paper in his pocket, which he showed to all such peers as were likely to be moved at its contents. They were of a singular character.* His Majesty permitted Lord Temple to say, that the King would consider every peer who voted for the Bill to be his personal enemy. This measure had, at all events, the merit of complete success. The Bill was thrown out in

the House of Lords by a majority of eight. Fox and North were summoned to deliver up their seals at midnight; Mr. Pitt became First Lord of the Treasury, and Lord Temple became Marquis of Buckingham.

The transformation of the Grenvilles was now accordingly complete. The offences of the father had been amply atoned for by the son; the uncle was forgotten in the nephew; and during the first administration of Mr. Pitt the royal favour was unsparingly bestowed upon the Grenvilles. In 1784 the Marquis again went to Ireland. William Grenville, who was at first Paymaster of the Forces, became in succession Speaker of the House of Commons, Secretary of State for the Home Department, and Secretary for Foreign Affairs; which latter position he occupied during the last ten years of Mr. Pitt's administration. In 1790 he was raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Grenville of Wootton; and shortly afterwards he was still further rewarded by the lucrative sinecure of the Auditorship of the Exchequer. Considering, however, the almost priceless service which the head of the family had rendered, they were not too highly rewarded. And thus much may be said of them: that, by whatever means they obtained possession of office, they discharged its duties with consummate ability and success. If we except the particular act by which the dissolution of the Whig government was secured, about which of course different opinions may be entertained, the present is, no doubt, the most creditable passage in the history of the House of Grenville. The Marquis was an excellent Lord-Lieutenant, and his brother was an excellent Foreign Secretary, whose

letters and despatches are still regarded as models of statesmen-like composition.

Although, however, the ambition of the House of Grenville was for the present satisfied, they were only recruiting their energies for fresh efforts at advancement. Even in 1783 Lord Temple had begun to murmur because his services in Ireland had not been sufficiently acknowledged; and had actually resigned his post, while Mr. Pitt was in the thick of the conflict. The Grenville appetite was keen, and could not tolerate delay. The Marquisate, which was conferred on him as soon as Pitt's government was settled, and the second Viceroyalty, which followed in 1787, appeased his craving for the time. But Mr. Pitt seems always to have thought that he was a rather troublesome adherent; and as he discouraged the system of governing through the support of great houses, he was secretly restless under the obligations of which the Marquis was constantly reminding him.

He was destined, however, to experience before he died a still more bitter specimen of the peculiar temper of the Grenvilles. There are few passages in our political history which are more complicated than the circumstances attending the dissolution of the Addington ministry and the return of Mr. Pitt to power. And of these circumstances the conduct of Lord Grenville, except indeed upon hypotheses more discreditable than we choose to entertain, is the least intelligible. It is well known that he refused to reunite himself in a ministry with Mr. Pitt unless Mr. Fox were included in it. It is well known also that Mr. Pitt would have co-operated with Mr. Fox if the King's dislike to this

statesman could have been surmounted; but in accordance with those principles which had first borne him into power, he declined to force upon his Majesty a minister who was personally distasteful to him. This is not the place for discussing the good or the evil of those principles. It is sufficient on the present occasion to remind our readers that such *were* the principles of Mr. Pitt, and that such by implication must have been the principles of Lord Grenville: seeing that his brother, Lord Temple, was the chosen instrument of establishing them in the first instance, and that he himself not only never expressed any disapprobation of the means then employed, but played a leading part in the government to which they led. When we remember this, and remember also that of these principles Fox was the inveterate opponent; and that not alone on this fundamental point was there a difference between him and Lord Grenville, but that the whole policy of the war up to 1801, which had been conducted by Grenville, had been persistently condemned by Fox, we shall be at a loss to understand the conduct of the former upon any other grounds than that of his personal character—the crotchetiness and egotism which, with all their great talents, was always observable in the Grenvilles.

Other explanations may be offered, but none which do not cast a slur upon either his abilities or his honesty. We refuse to believe that he had any idea of supplanting Mr. Pitt; it is difficult to believe that he had any idea of carrying Roman Catholic Emancipation, or of breaking up the system of party. He *ought*, at all events, to have known better than to think either scheme possible in 1804.

The dogged resolution of the King, who, in the then temper of the country was sure of an Orange majority that would enable him to carry on the government though Pitt and his party stood aloof, should have shown him how hopeless was the one scheme; and the recollections of the Fox and North coalition should have taught him the futility of the other. Whatever be the true explanation of it, we have never doubted that this was the capital blunder of Lord Grenville's career. "I will teach that proud man that I can do without him, if it costs me my life," said Mr. Pitt, in words which the father of Mr. Pitt might have hurled at the uncle of Lord Grenville; and it *did* cost him his life. But it cost Lord Grenville if not his natural, yet, with one brief interval of power, his official existence. The place which he vacated in the Tory ranks was filled up by Lord Castlereagh. Lord Grey became the leader of the Whigs, and the legitimate successor of Pitt sank into political obscurity.

In the administration which followed on the death of Mr. Pitt the Grenvilles were tolerably provided for. Lord Grenville himself was Prime Minister; Thomas Grenville, his brother, was President of the Indian Board; young Lord Temple, his nephew, was Vice-President of the Council; the head of the House was too great a man, it seems, to take any post but the highest, so he remained quietly at Stowe, receiving the reports of his connexion, and issuing his royal mandates. Lord Grenville, however, had not been in office three months when he found out the mistake which he had committed. His administration was bound together by no party tie, and inspired by no *esprit*

de corps. Fox's popularity was a great help to the government, but Lord Grenville never reposed perfect confidence in his foreign policy. The Whig leader, moreover, had spoken in such terms of the deceased Tory minister as ought to have been, and doubtless were, most painful to his old friend. He had refused to subscribe to the public funeral of Mr. Pitt on the ground that he had been through life opposed to Mr. Pitt's principles, and believed that his administration of affairs had been most injurious to the country. Considering that of the nineteen years which that administration had lasted, seventeen had been passed by Lord Grenville in the closest co-operation with Mr. Pitt, he must have listened to these words with a singular mixture of emotions. But he was indeed encircled by embarrassments. While still harassed to death by the internal jealousies of his own cabinet, and of the motley party which supported him, he received a letter from the Marquis, full of those peculiar infirmities by which the virtues of the House of Grenville had always been so heavily counterbalanced. It was couched in a tone of peevish and pompous vanity: Why was he not oftener consulted? why did not the Premier run down to Stowe whenever he had a difficulty in Downing-street, and confide his trouble to that counsellor on whom a king had once been glad to lean? He was the head of the House, and he had a right to expect some attention; but his brothers appeared to have forgotten him. It was the way of the world, and he should know better for the future than to expect gratitude at their hands. This attack, as might be supposed, stung Lord Grenville deeply. He answered it

in a letter full of dignity and feeling, expressing more than once a hope that he might soon have an opportunity of resigning office altogether; and the Marquis for the time appears to have suppressed his discontent. But heavier clouds were gathering round the Grenville ministry. Fox lay on his death-bed; Lord Grey was seventy-four, and his death might at any moment remove Lord Howick from the House of Commons, where he was one of the most efficient members of the administration. Yet it is curious, amid all their troubles, to observe the unfaltering confidence which the Grenvilles reposed in themselves. If there had only been enough of them, the country might still have been saved. Unhappily, there were but three, and three were not enough to work the pumps, to steer the vessel, and give orders to the crew, all at once. If Thomas Grenville could only have continued at the Indian Board, have been First Lord of the Admiralty, and Chancellor of the Exchequer at the same time, something perhaps might have been done.

It is possible, however, that the Grenville administration might have survived the death of Mr. Fox, and all the other causes of its weakness, and have gradually won the confidence of Parliament, but for one fatal obstacle. The King liked Lord Grenville, and Lord Grenville respected his Majesty. His lordship was a man of unquestioned talents; he had never betrayed the slightest sympathy with the French revolutionists, and he had declared himself in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war, and the perpetuity of the national defences. He represented the public opinion of his day on all but one point, and even that

point need not have proved a stumbling-block to him, had it not been for his own conduct in 1804. It was believed by the Roman Catholics in Ireland that Lord Grenville's refusal to join Mr. Pitt in that year arose from the resolution never to forego their claims. Now, therefore, was the time to bring those claims forward. Such an agitation was commenced in Dublin as left Lord Grenville no alternative; but he at once saw the fatal mistake which the Romanist party had committed, and foresaw the probability that it would end in his expulsion from office. The course which he pursued, however, in this embarrassing situation was sensible and honourable. An Act, called the Irish Act, had been passed in the Irish Parliament of 1793, by which the right of filling certain civil and military appointments was conceded to the Roman Catholics, subject to such restrictions as were still deemed necessary for the public safety. A Roman Catholic could not be Lord Chancellor or Lord-Lieutenant; he could not be Commander-in-Chief, or Master-General of the Ordnance, or a General on the Staff. Lord Grenville proposed to extend this Act to England; to do away with the limitations which affected the military service; to throw open the navy as well as the army to Roman Catholics; and to include Protestant Dissenters within the operation of the Act. The extension of the original Act to England would probably have met with no opposition, for its restriction to Ireland after the Union was a manifest absurdity. If the regiment in which a Roman Catholic officer was serving happened to be ordered to England, the officer became disqualified by law from holding his commission, and was obliged either

to throw up his profession, or to expose himself to pains and penalties. The wonder, as Lord Howick said, was not that the grievance was about to be remedied then, but that it had not been abolished long ago. With regard to the navy, the argument of ministers was equally logical and conclusive. Nothing had been said about the navy in 1793, because Ireland had no navy; but most assuredly the spirit of that Act would include the naval profession. With regard to the other modifications of the original Act, there was room for more difference of opinion, though they seem absurd enough at the present day. Such was the measure to which George III. was now requested to assent. The tough old King hemmed and hawed and hesitated, but did at last consent to the extension of the Act to England —certainly: to its additional provisions also—as the Grenvilles thought. The intelligence was at once despatched to Ireland, though Lord Grenville felt that his Bill, even in its integrity, could only serve as a temporary sop. But within a week from its introduction into the House of Commons by Lord Howick a hitch had occurred in high quarters. The King told Lord Grenville that he hadn't understood from him in the first instance that the Bill went quite so far as it did; he objected to throwing open the navy; he would never consent to have Roman Catholics on the Staff. The government protested for a while, but, partly because they felt that the measure was of doubtful utility after all, partly because Lord Grenville, as he tells us, really respected the religious scruples of the King, they determined not only to withdraw the modifications, but to abandon the measure altogether. Unluckily, however,

as we think, they coupled this concession with a statement which, if accepted, would still have left a thorn in the royal conscience. They were to be at liberty, they said, to express their own opinions on the subject, wherever and whenever they chose. This the King would not allow. He demanded a written promise from his ministers that they would never revive the question. A pledge of this nature the Grenvilles were unanimous in refusing, and they were shortly afterwards informed that his Majesty had no further occasion for their services.

The Grenvilles always attributed this resolution of the royal mind to the secret representations of Lord Eldon and Lord Sidmouth. Canning, in his place in Parliament, denied the insinuation most positively on the part of Lord Eldon, and both the accused statesmen vindicated themselves at some length in the House of Lords. We shall not here revive a controversy in which we cannot go beyond conjecture. The King was certainly quite capable of acting as he did without the advice of other people. But a more interesting question is this, whether, namely, he was justified in demanding the written promise, and whether ministers were justified in resigning rather than concede the point. On the one hand, it was urged that ministers had a constitutional right to offer advice to their sovereign, and that they could not preclude themselves from ever reopening a question in which such serious possibilities were involved. On the other hand, it was urged that ministers had no right to keep the public in suspense, or to purchase popularity by ostentatious sympathy with wrongs which it was not their real intention to redress. It

will hardly be denied that there is much to be said on both sides. We agree with Lord Grenville and his colleagues that it was monstrous to require from them such a declaration as the King ultimately demanded; but we cannot think that the reservation by which the withdrawal of the bill was qualified was either a necessary or a magnanimous step. What chiefly strikes us when we reflect upon it is, that for all practical purposes it was utterly unnecessary. Nothing could have deprived ministers of the right of free speech. There was no occasion to assert that right to prevent men from thinking they had renounced it. To have withdrawn a bill which, while deeply painful to the sovereign, promised little satisfaction to those for whose benefit it was intended, would have been no bar to their reconsideration of the case at any more convenient season. Had they dropped the measure for the present, and held their tongues about the future, all might have gone well. To have mentally resolved that the Catholic question, if shelved for the present, was certainly not to be abandoned was one thing; it was another thing to flaunt that resolve in the King's face; to proclaim it from the house-tops; and to hold it *in terrorem* over the Crown, the Parliament, and the public. The demand in question was in fact a direct challenge to the King. There was in it, moreover, a spice of that old dictation against which he had all his life protested. Lord Grenville should have known him better than to expect he would submit to this. But tact and knowledge of human nature were not characteristic of the Grenvilles, and for want of them on this occasion the family made a downward step. The Roman Catholics saw their hopes deferred, and the govern-

ment of the country was transferred for another quarter of a century to Tories of the hardest school.

The events above narrated took place in 1807. In March of that year Lord Grenville's cabinet was dismissed: not, however, until it had signalised its tenure of power by one of those measures which are landmarks in the history of nations. In the month of February, 1807, an act was passed for the abolition of the slave trade throughout the dominions of the British crown. From that time to his death, which happened nearly thirty years afterwards, he never again held office for a single day.

In 1809, in 1811, and in 1812, he was concerned in negotiations for the construction of a broad-bottomed ministry; but in each case they came to nothing. There were three parties at work all along—the Sidmouth and Eldon party, the Canning and Wellesley party, and the Grey and Grenville party. The first was at variance with the third upon the Catholic claims; the third was at variance with the second on the Peninsular war, for Grenville was but a lukewarm supporter of the Duke of Wellington; and each differed from the other as to the right man for Prime Minister. There is good reason to believe, however, that on the first formation of the Regency the Whigs paid the penalty of that exclusiveness, which has been laid to their charge more often perhaps than they deserved, but of which they have unquestionably been guilty. Burke was too high-minded to lay traps for the men who had neglected him, or to avenge his private wrongs at the cost of his political principles. But Lords Grey and Grenville had a very different man to deal with, and it seems beyond a doubt

that the desertion of the Whigs by the Prince Regent in 1811 was due to the influence of Sheridan. He had not, as he thought, received his due from the Whig ministry of Lord Grenville. He fancied himself slighted and insulted by his old friends, and he watched his opportunity for vengeance. When the Prince was called upon to draw up an answer to the address of the two Houses inviting him to accept the Regency, he entrusted the task to Lord Grenville and Lord Grey. They composed an answer, in which the unpalatable restrictions imposed by the ministers upon the Regent were not even glanced at. Here was Sheridan's chance. He represented to the Prince that there was a want of deference in the language of the two Whig lords to which he ought not to submit. He himself was empowered to frame a new reply. His composition was preferred; and the Whig statesmen, after a grave and dignified remonstrance, withdrew from the royal confidence. It is however only fair to Sheridan to remember that he always himself asserted that the Whigs on this occasion were sacrificed to the pride of Lord Grenville, who, having supported the "restrictions" in 1788, refused to tarnish his reputation for consistency by consenting to any relaxation of them.

In the negotiations which followed the death of Mr. Perceval in 1812, the Grenvilles and their Whig friends still held out for terms which the enemy was too strong to grant. Their conduct has been vigorously defended by Horner; but even he was obliged to admit that their "maxims were stoical, and their manner too peremptory." Hallam. as we learn from Horner's correspondence, disap-

proved of their behaviour. The truth seems to be, that though eminently able, incorruptible, and sincere, the united Whig leaders were very ambitious and very proud men, and that they knew not how to disguise these qualities beneath the arts of the courtier. On the other hand, however agreeable the Whigs might have been to the Prince of Wales, it was not likely he would find their doctrines quite so palatable when Prince Regent. They still maintained the old theory, that the party, and not the King, was to choose the first minister. And this, as Canning himself declared to a friend of Lord Buckingham, "was the real but unavowed cause of the breaking-off of these negotiations."

Lord Grenville, it would seem, never became wholly reconciled to the war, and while it lasted he continued in opposition to the Government. He voted, however, for the dethronement and exile of Napoleon, and differed from Lord Grey in supporting the coercive measures of the Government in 1817. It was probably the isolated position in which he now began to find himself that bred in this distinguished man a weariness of political life, and a craving for that lettered leisure which he was so well fitted to adorn. But he also looked with disfavour upon the attempt which about this time was in course of agitation at Stowe to revive the old prestige of the House of Grenville, and to create a third party in the State. Whether he felt his health begin to fail, whether he saw that the time had gone by for these family combinations, or whether he shrank from the possibility of having to defer to his nephew as the head of the House, it is now impossible to say. But in the year 1818 he expressed his intention of retiring from public life;

and though he was induced to defer this step for some years, yet he seems henceforward to have acted the part of a spectator, and to have resigned the idea of again becoming a member of the Government. During the reign of George IV. his opinions on the whole seem to have coincided with Mr. Canning's, although he never conquered his dislike of this too lively statesman. But he approved of Roman Catholic Emancipation, and was opposed to Parliamentary Reform; and the combination of these two apparently discordant views was peculiar to Canning and his school. His withdrawal from the political stage was gradual, nor can we fix any exact date at which it may be said to have taken place. But certainly some years before the death of George IV. he withdrew into the shades of Dropmore, where he passed the remainder of his days in the society of his favourite classics. During the long illness which preceded his death, "I always," says Sir H. Halford, "found him not tranquil and cheerful only, as I might have expected from his habitual piety, but amused; and on my asking him the secret of this happy peculiarity, he answered, 'I go back to my classics, sir.' The next day he sent me a copy of his 'Nugæ Metricæ,' which bespeak a happy facility of composition and a correct taste." Lord Grenville was a very elegant scholar. At Oxford, 1779, he gained the Chancellor's prize for Latin verse, on the subject of "Vis electrica:" and it was probably his well-known love of literature which turned the scale in his favour when he contested the Chancellorship of the University with Lord Eldon in 1809. He left behind him a copy of Homer covered with marginal annotations, but of the value

attached to them by scholars we are in ignorance. His Latin verses, of which the best have lately been republished in the "Anthologia Oxoniensis," have all the freedom and vigour of the old school, and they are inspired by real and natural feeling, in which modern Latin verses are so often lamentably deficient. The curious in such things will understand what we mean if they look at his lines on Death, his "Exul Gallicus," and his epitaph on a favourite dog. The declining days of Lord Grenville form one of those pictures on which the mind dwells with unmixed pleasure. He seems to have cast back no lingering looks at the active world which he had quitted. His devotion to letters was real, and sufficiently occupied his mind; and in his brother Thomas he must have found a sympathising fellow-scholar, as well as an affectionate relative. His life glided away easily between his seat at Dropmore and his house in London, amused by the studies which recalled to him the days of his youth, the "antique towers" of Eton, and the pleasant gardens of Oxford. Intercourse with his own family was no longer at the mercy of politics, and he had the satisfaction in his closing days of seeing the whole family party once more firmly reunited. When the Duke of Buckingham took leave of him, before quitting England in 1827, he cried with joy at finding the members of his House "again acting together."

Let us take our leave of him with his own beautiful lines:

Verum ubi terrestri mens functa labore, quietem
Expetit, inque suas gestit abire domos,
Corporeis lente vinclis exsolvitur, et se
Vix sentit vitâ deficiente mori;

Ut levis arboreos autumni sidere fructus
Molliter in patrium decutit aura solum;
Tum sociâ compôsta manu, notosque Penates
Inter, habet facilis lumina fessa sopor.
Quin et amicorum curæ lacrymæque sequuntur
Et modica instaurat funera justus honos.
Alta petant alii, et perituræ laudis amore
Sanguineum insistant ambitionis iter;
Hac mihi sit, tacitæ decurso tramite vitæ,
Hac demum in cœlos scandere posse viâ.

Lord Grenville died at Dropmore on the 12th of January, 1834; and as he had no children, the title became extinct. Besides his Latin compositions, he left few or no literary remains. One or two of his speeches; a financial scheme in imitation of Pitt's, which he laid before the House of Lords in 1806; a letter written in 1810 to the Earl of Fingall, embodying the writer's views upon the Catholic question; and an edition of Lord Chatham's letters to his nephew, Lord Camelford—are, as far as we know, all the published remains of one of the last of our great classic statesmen.

The remaining brother of this distinguished trio, Mr. Thomas Grenville, who survived his younger brother, Lord Grenville, twelve years, and his elder one thirty-three, died in 1846 at the great age of ninety-one. On leaving Oxford he entered one of the regiments of Guards; but some unfair treatment which he experienced from the government of the day led him to renounce his profession; and during the second ministry of Lord Rockingham, in 1782, he was despatched to Paris to negotiate the treaty of Versailles. He was recalled by Lord Shelburne. But his abilities were so highly rated, that under the Fox and

North administration he was destined to the Governor-Generalship of India. This prospect, however, was cut short by the accession of Mr. Pitt to power; and for some years Thomas Grenville remained out of Parliament, and out of favour with his two brothers, from whose political friends he stood aloof. He was not proof, however, against the prestige of Mr. Pitt's success, the terrors of the French Revolution, and the solicitations of his own family. Being returned to Parliament at the general election of 1790, he gave his support to Mr. Pitt. In 1794 he was sent as minister extraordinary to Vienna. In 1798 he was made a privy councillor. In 1799 he went as ambassador to Berlin. In 1801 he was appointed Chief-Justice in Eyre, south of the Trent, a sinecure of 2000*l.* a year, which he held to his death. And in 1806 he became first President of the India Board, and afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty in his brother's administration. With him, however, he retired in 1807, never again to accept office, and with him he retired virtually from political life in 1818. Henceforth he devoted himself to the collection of that magnificent library which he at his death bequeathed to the nation, and which had been one of his earliest tastes. When an ensign in the Guards, he used to say, he once bid for a scarce edition of the Bible against the whole bench of bishops. It is probable that both he and Lord Grenville inherited their scholarly taste from their mother, a daughter of "the classic Wyndham."

We now come to the third generation of the Grenvilles. The second Lord Temple and the first Marquis of Buckingham died in 1813, and was succeeded by that Lord Temple

who was Vice-President of the Council in 1806, and who had married in 1795 the heiress to the duchy of Chandos. During the few years that his uncle Lord Grenville continued to maintain the dignity of the family in Parliament the Marquis remained quiet. But towards the year 1817 he began to think it necessary to assert the authority of Stowe, and also to play for a dukedom, through the formation of a new Grenville party. This, however, was more easily proposed than accomplished. The Grenvilles disliked Canning; yet Canning was almost the only man left with whom they could hope to co-operate. They commanded only six votes, and they had no man of sufficient mark among themselves to rally a party round him, or to stand forward in the eyes of Parliament as a future minister. Under these difficult circumstances, it cannot be denied that they played their cards well. A government which had been used to large majorities, and the unquestioning support of all its regular adherents, fancied itself tottering when one declined as low as fifty, and the other now and then ventured an independent vote. The interest of the Grenvilles, which in one way and another was considerable, was worth buying. But for nearly two years the buyer and seller continued to haggle over the price. The Marquis wanted too much, and he wanted it in an inconvenient way. The Government was all powerful in the House of Lords and whatever cabinet seats could be spared must be reserved for the House of Commons. The Marquis longed sorely to be in the cabinet; and gave his people no encouragement to support the measures of Lord Liverpool while he had any hopes of obtaining this price

for his adherence. However, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Liverpool were obstinate, and the Marquis at length gave way. Charles Wynn, his own man, so to speak, took the Board of Control, with a seat in the cabinet. Some inferior connexions were gratified with subordinate appointments. The Marquis himself was made a duke, and the Grenvilles for the second time became zealous and avowed Tories.

In the year following his elevation the Duke made one more effort to extort a seat in the cabinet. But he was finally put down by the Duke of Wellington, who told him that "no man could force himself into that situation;" and the head of the House of Grenville was obliged to fall back upon the study of minerals, and a correspondence with Sir Walter Scott upon the history of tartans.

The succeeding four years were passed by the Duke of Buckingham in the innocent recreations aforesaid, in corresponding with his various lieutenants, and in listening to abuse of Canning. And here, though the inquiry is not strictly a part of our subject, we may be permitted to ask what was the secret of that dislike of Mr. Canning by which the leading men of all parties seem to have been actuated. Lord Grey, Lord Grenville, Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington, and Sir Robert Peel, at different times of their lives, all betrayed the same sentiment. But it can hardly have been Mr. Canning's opinions which led to this common hostility; for in his political opinions he differed less widely from most of the above-mentioned statesmen than has commonly been supposed. During the latter part of his life, at all events, his views on foreign

policy, on Roman Catholic Emancipation, and on Parliamentary Reform, were substantially the same as those of Lord Castlereagh, Lord Grenville, and Sir Robert Peel. Besides, wider differences of opinion than even those which are vulgarly supposed to have divided Canning from his colleagues have existed ere now between statesmen without exciting personal animosity. Yet from the death of Mr. Pitt to 1827, there was not a single parliamentary crisis the central difficulty of which does not seem to have been Canning. There is truth unquestionably in the common notion that he was the victim of patrician exclusiveness. The great lords who from a Stowe, a Woburn, or a Chatsworth, directed the votes of their clients, and assumed a kind of royal state, loved not to meet the son of an actress upon a footing of equality, or more. The Duke of Wellington, who shared in these ideas himself, had grafted upon them a military impatience of *finesse*, and a suspicion of literary statesmen, which carried him even further than the oligarchs from sympathy with a man like Canning. Yet when we have made every allowance for the force of aristocratic prejudice, it seems difficult to believe that we have then got a sufficient explanation. Lord Liverpool, it is true, both loved and trusted Mr. Canning to the last day of his life; and he had, of course, a host of admirers among the young men and commoners in Parliament. But still there must have been, we think, some defect in his character—some want of taste, or want of tact, at all events, to create that hostility which was scarcely appeased over his grave. Mr. Canning, we should readily grant, was the legitimate successor of Mr. Pitt; but then he was not Mr.

Pitt. Nor were the circumstances under which he aspired to the leadership of the Tory party at all like those which had cemented the authority of his great master. Mr. Pitt was the son of Lord Chatham; and he was the favourite of George III., when George III. was in full possession of that iron will before which the mightiest had bowed. These two facts alone, independently of his personal qualities, won him the respect of the great families. Presently came the French Revolution, and the great families were frightened. They sank their traditions for a time under an overpowering sense of public danger. The Bentincks, the Fitzwilliams, the Manners, and a goodly array of great Houses, became the loyal servants of the Crown, and the warmest supporters of the minister. Before these sentiments had cooled Mr. Pitt died. Let us pass over a few years, and observe under what circumstances Mr. Canning made his bid for power. He had neither the prestige of an illustrious father, nor the support of a determined sovereign. As the dangers of Napoleonic aggression and "French principles" began to recede, the great body of the Whigs relapsed into their old ideas. Every thing which had conspired to invigorate the Toryism of Pitt was wanting to his successor Mr. Canning; while the personal character of the latter, instead of being calculated to lessen the effect of this difference, was unhappily calculated to increase it. The cold pride, the austerity, and the simplicity of Pitt were exactly those qualities which disarm the resentment of aristocratic rivals. The gaiety, the familiarity, nay, the very elegance of Mr. Canning were exactly the qualities which provoke it. An aristocracy is apt to believe that it

ought to have a monopoly of such gifts, and to stare at the display of them in others as a species of impertinence. Canning, we suspect, had not the tact to see this, or, if he had, was either too careless or too contemptuous to heed it. We might respect this independence in the man, but we think it was a fault in the minister. He who aspires to lead a great party, of which the chief supporters are his superiors in rank and station, must consult their foibles if he would retain their confidence. If he dislike such work, he had better not put his hand to it. If he does put his hand to it, and yet contemns the only means by which success can be achieved, he may leave behind a brilliant reputation; but can only expect, while living, to encounter exactly that series of petty and depressing mortifications which ultimately wore out Mr. Canning.

But to return to the Grenvilles. The course of events has now brought us down to the eve of that period which the first chapter of the present Diary so curiously illustrates. In February, 1827, Lord Liverpool, who had been Prime Minister of England nearly thirteen years, was seized with apoplexy, and it soon became known that he would never reoccupy his old place. Who, then, was to be the new minister? And at this point begins a series of only half-revealed transactions, of personal rivalries, and of undignified bursts of temper on the part of some half-dozen great men, which it is really disagreeable to contemplate. Peel, Wellington, Canning, and the Duke of Buckingham are the chief actors in the drama, which ended, as our readers know, in the promotion of Canning to the Treasury, and the immediate secession of Peel and his leader

into the ranks of opposition. Wellington refused even to retain the command of the army under Canning, though he accepted it again under Lord Godrich, who was an avowed Whig. Peel professed his inability to act with any minister who was favourable to the Roman Catholic claims, though two years before he had confessed that he was favourable to them himself. It was just at this moment, when it was as yet uncertain if Canning's ministry would stand, that the Duke of Buckingham had an audience of the King: and the notes of what passed, as described in these pages, interesting as they are from their general political tenour, are still more so from the additional light which they shed upon the character of the House of Grenville. *Qualis ab incepto processerit.*

The very first sentence in the Diary tells the old tale. The Duke, we must premise, was now making ready for his tour. July 3rd, 1827, he says, "Sturges Bourne writes word that a vice-lieutenant must, in decorum, be appointed during my absence." Sturges Bourne was one of the Duke's men, who at this time had taken office under Canning, as Secretary of State for the Home Department. But the Grenville party were not instructed to give their full support to the Prime Minister. And, indeed, Mr. Charles Wynn, whom we have seen installed in the cabinet as the representative of the party, seems about this time to have given mortal offence to his patron by the fidelity with which he adhered to Canning. But the Duke's interview with the King is the cream of this chapter, and we shall give the greater part of it in his own language:

He then exclaimed: "Ah! these are indeed strange times, and it is a strange political atmosphere which we are breathing."

I replied: "So strange, sir, that I cannot breathe it, and I retire to avoid it."

He then, hardly allowing me to say a word, entered himself into a detail, for two hours uninterruptedly, of the whole circumstances attending the late change, and most clearly made out a story against Peel and the Duke of Wellington, the truth of which I cannot doubt, and which perfectly surprised me. The King, on the political "smash" of the ministry, urged the Government to hold together, and to choose some one, he cared not who, Protestant or Catholic, to recommend as Prime Minister; that, of course, he could not admit the situation to be elective; but that, if they would name any one that would hold them together on the principles of Lord Liverpool's Government, that man should be his minister.

Twice he saw the Duke of Wellington, and twice said the same thing to him, urging them to unite; and twice the Duke of Wellington declined himself suggesting any person, specially saying that he could not be his minister; that he had gained all he wished for, more than he had hoped for; that he had been bred up amongst camps and armies; that all his political views had arisen out of, or had been secondary to, his military proceedings, and therefore that he *could not* be his minister; that as to a purely Protestant government, it could not be made.

The King suggested several names—Bexley, Bathurst, &c. &c. Why not make them sticks to rally round? No, they would name nobody; and the Duke of Wellington persevered in excluding himself.

At last Peel, who had kept a very high and mighty bearing, declared himself ready to meet Canning upon the subject; and after their meeting Peel wrote to the King to say that one had been suggested, but that he would wait upon the King, as he did not like to put the name in writing. In the mean while several delays, occasioned by Peel, intervened; and at last, after Tierney had declared that he would ask a question in the House of Commons about the Government—that he must do so to keep it out of other hands—Peel came to the King, and thundered out the Duke of Wellington's name.

The King having been refused twice by the Duke himself, and having under that refusal announced that he was not to be the man, said he

would not then, in the last moment, in the eleventh hour, have a man crammed down his throat, declined the Duke, and suggested *any other;* and then upon, for the first time, a refusal being given to act with Canning, refused the Duke of Wellington, and named Canning; and then the resignation took place, the Duke of Wellington leading the way, because his own suggestion had been adopted; and he followed it up by throwing at the King's head the whole of his employments, military and all. The King begged him to keep the army. No; all or nothing!

Now, the Duke had an entire right to say that he was the fittest man to be minister, and the only one to keep parties together; but he had no right to protest until the last moment that he would not be the man, and then employ that last moment in putting the pistol loaded with his own name to the King's head.

With respect to the Corn Law, when the King found that his own brother was against the Government upon that subject, he sent the Duke of Wellington to him, and the Duke told the King to be easy, for that he had "castrated the bill of all that could be objectionable." That very bill *he* threw out! It is plain that the Duke meant to be King, and failed. So much for Canning's nomination.

Now, as to the Whigs, I found this was the same part with the King. I asked him if he had any hope that they would stand steadily by him on what both he and I considered the best interests of his country.

The King's answer was, "*Alors, comme alors.*"

Into the controversy between Wellington and Canning we shall not plunge. But we pause to point out that the regular old Tories of that day seem to have been quite as much disposed to "coerce and compel" their gracious sovereign as were ever the Whigs of the eighteenth century. The King proceeded:

"I offered to take any one whom they would name, Protestant or Catholic, provided I could have kept the thing together. Canning from the beginning was ready to undertake the task. I told them so. They expressed no feeling against him personally at first. I only asked them to name; they declined. I must have a minister; the Opposition threatened to storm my citadel. I again urged them. They

again refused; and in the last moment, when they saw that I was driven to the wall, they pressed upon me the very name which they and the individual himself had repeatedly declared was the *only* name that could not and ought not to be put forward. I then had no resource but to direct Canning to write the note to the Duke of Wellington which you saw, and all the occurrences which you are aware of followed. If it is the great devil that has been forced upon me, it is they who have done it. I did not want Canning in the government upon Castlereagh's death, but they forced him upon me. Now they wanted in the same way to force Wellington; but I am at least somebody in the State, and have shown them that I will not be bullied. The future must take care of itself. Now, as to the Opposition, the Corn Bill has held it together; but draw the Catholic question round it, and what becomes of it? Like a salamander, it must expire, surrounded by its own fire."

The king expressed much indignation against Lord Mansfield, who had accused him in the House of Lords of having changed his opinion on the Catholic question:

"He lied. Had I been an individual, I would have told him so, and fought him. As it was, I put the Archbishop of Canterbury in a fright by sending him as my second to Mansfield, to tell him he lied. The Archbishop came down bustling here to know what he was to do. So, said I, go and do my bidding; tell him he lies, and kick his behind in my name!"

In this truly royal style his Majesty, we are told, "went on for a long time," when the Duke took up the discourse, and professed to agree with the King that he was a very ill-used man. But in spite of all the King's explanations, he retained his opinion of Mr. Canning. "He took advantage of his Majesty's goodness to me," says the Duke, "to browbeat, insult, and proscribe me." This means, that when the King had made Buckingham a duke, Canning would not make him a minister. But after this reflection, by-the-by, the Duke burst out with a truly magnificent peroration:

"I said I had no cause in common with the Opposition, and could

not assist them in persevering in a line of taking his Majesty prisoner, and binding him hand and foot in the manner in which he had described to me. That I felt I owed everything to him. He had continued me my father's honours, although opposed to his minister. He had augmented them, and had placed me upon one step only lower than that upon which his throne was placed, and had done so in my case alone; that I felt I owed him a debt of gratitude, and that he never should think even that I had forsaken him, or would forsake him; that I would prove it now by humbly placing in his hands—not his minister's—all the support and strength which I possessed; and that, so long as he found reason to support ministers, I would place my strength in his hands to do the like; but especially requested him to understand that I would have nothing to say to his minister.

"The King thanked me most warmly, expressed his gratitude, said he should never forget it, and I then kissed his hand. His Majesty wished me my health, again expressed his gratitude, and I left him."

This is the real grand old manner of the aristocrats, at a time when such language was more than a mere form. It is clear, from this and other passages, that the Duke of Buckingham still cherished hopes of playing over again the part acted by his father in 1783, and of reasserting the peculiar prerogatives of the House of Grenville, which consisted in being the *Deus ex machina* in every great political crisis. "Thus," says he, "I have established myself in the King's confidence, and have made it necessary for his Majesty to call upon me the first time Canning and the Whigs come to blows, which *must* be soon." But the gem of the whole narrative is to come. The Duke of Buckingham explained to his son, the Marquis of Chandos (the late Duke), what had passed between himself and the King; and his son, he says, "acknowledged the advantages of the line which I had adopted, and saw the almost necessary result of the ministers' quarrelling, and my being called in. But

I see that his objection lies too deep to Canning to be got at and removed, and that although he sees my support is the least satisfactory thing to Canning in the world, given as it will be given, and that it is much better calculated to turn him out, instead of keeping him in, yet it is 'support,' and not opposition to him, and that Chandos cannot bring himself to." There is an astonishing *naïveté* in these words; they evince a power of self-deception which is enormous, and plainly prove how completely the old oligarchical traditions still possessed the Duke's mind, and how honestly convinced he was that a man like Canning was an inferior being, with whom it was quite unnecessary to keep the same measures as he would have felt bound to observe towards his equals. It is almost a pity, we think, that this passage was printed; for to many persons who are unable to take these words in connexion with the whole family history, they will make the Duke appear to be a worse man than he was.

Our readers are aware that the Duke's ambition was disappointed. Canning died in office, and the Duke was out of England at the time. In all the stirring events of 1828 and 1829 he took no part. But even had he been able to do so, the time had evidently gone by when the House of Grenville could decide the destinies of the nation. The people were awakened, and the days of the "Houses" were numbered. Henceforth we hear no more of "third parties," of "standing by the sovereign," of lieutenants and vice-lieutenants. Unfortunately, however, the concluding volumes of the Grenville Annals, *i.e.* "The Court and Cabinets of William IV. and Queen Victoria," are singularly meagre

in information respecting the proceedings of the family. We know that in 1832 the Marquis of Chandos left his mark upon the Reform Bill, and that seems to have been the last great political action of the Grenville clan. In 1835 and in 1839 opportunities occurred in which the Duke might have distinguished himself. But he did nothing. It is to be presumed, indeed, that his health was failing, for he died in 1839, only five years later than one of his uncles, and seven years before the other. His death, however, terminates the third generation of the family; and with a brief sketch of the fourth, as represented by the late Duke, we conclude our article.

The author of the "Chandos Clause" was born in 1797, and first entered Parliament in 1826 as member for the county of Bucks. He was a stanch Tory, and he and his father had many disagreements in consequence. They quarrelled about the management of the Duke's parliamentary interest during his retirement from England. They quarrelled again while he was absent over an address issued by Lord Chandos to the people of Buckinghamshire; and the Duke considered it necessary to transmit a letter to England, to be published, in condemnation of these proceedings. The Marquis continued to sit for his county till his father's death, and during his stay in the House of Commons he distinguished himself by the passage of the "Chandos Clause" aforesaid, which, according to Lord John Russell, destroyed the symmetry of the Reform Bill; and by obtaining a committee in 1836 to examine the agricultural grievances. His zeal in behalf of his constituency earned him the title of "The Farmers' Friend."

And he gave a signal proof of his sincerity, some years afterwards, when he retired from the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel rather than be a party to any alteration of the Corn Laws. His resignation took place in 1842, and closed his political career.

He now devoted himself to the arrangement and publication of that series of memoirs on which this Article is founded. But six years after his retirement a heavier calamity fell upon him than the loss even of a cabinet seat. The Duke's father had left England in 1827, for the purpose of nursing his estates, which had been cruelly encumbered by his liberality to the French royal family during their exile in this country. They had been maintained at Hartwell with princely munificence. But after their return to France they conveniently forgot the obligation, and left their benefactor to struggle with his difficulties as he could. In addition to this source of embarrassment, the Duke's own expenditure had been conducted for many years upon a scale of lavish profusion, the results of which were visible in the splendid collection of curiosities which he possessed at Stowe. Finally, on an entertainment which he provided for her present Majesty he laid out so vast a sum as is thought to have very materially contributed to the calamity which eventually overtook him. In 1848 the crash came, and the same year saw the ruin of the House of Bourbon. There is a poetical justice in this coincidence which it is not perhaps childish to observe. The sale at Stowe took place in the month of September, and lasted twenty-one days. Our readers doubtless recollect the eloquent leading articles, the picturesque descriptions, and the imposing cata-

logues, which that event called forth from the public journals. But they may not all be aware of the unaffected sympathy which these misfortunes inspired in the neighbourhood, where the Duke was unboundedly popular, and where his political consistency and his private munificence will long be remembered to his honour.

We have now, as we proposed, traced the history of this distinguished family for almost a century. If we have occasionally been severe on their principles of action, we have never questioned the force of their abilities. They began as Whigs in the middle of the reign of George II.; they were Tories through the reign of Pitt; they assumed a neutral hue from the death of that minister to the beginning of the reign of George IV.; and they reverted to extreme Toryism after the passage of the Reform Bill. As more than one of these changes was coupled with manifest advantages to themselves, without being recommended by any powerful extraneous reasons, impartial critics cannot extol the House of Grenville as a model of political purity. But they were not much worse than their neighbours. If they were ambitious, they were not corrupt; and if they were often egotistic, they were never feeble or frivolous. Their greatness, however, belongs to a phase of our representative system which has now passed away. A few great peers have still a few little boroughs, but the tendency is every day to diminish them. And the power of any one great house to stand between the sovereign and the parliament has, whether for good or for evil, departed out of England for ever.

CHARLES JAMES FOX, 1858.*

We are not among the enthusiastic worshippers of the statesman whose life is now before us. So far are we from being so, that we cannot acquit him of grievous errors against friendship, against patriotism, and against policy. He deserted old connexions and formed new ones, either with no regard to principle, or, what is often as nearly as bad in a public man, with no regard to appearances. His relations with Burke are either openly condemned or else ignored, even by his present biographer. Nor do we anticipate that in the later stages of his work his lordship will find it possible to defend them. At the same time we have no doubt that except when goaded by sudden disappointment into conduct that defied consistency, he really endeavoured to act up to those great old principles which once played a splendid part in the history of our country; and which, if useless and cumbersome now,

* Life and Times of Charles James Fox. By the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P. Vol. i. Bentley.

are like ancient armour, still venerable. The majestic maxims which were levelled against Bute and North seem as obsolete to ourselves as the equipment of the barons at Runnymede, and we smile at the harmless old gentlemen who occasionally affect them as we might have done at the Eglintoun Tournament or at the man in brass. But in the time of Charles Fox they still had their uses. It is possible that at one time the Whigs may have had as much ground for apprehending an autocrat in George III. as the Tories had for apprehending a Mayor of the Palace in Sir Robert Walpole. Then it was that Fox stood out boldly and brilliantly before the public gaze. His prowess was tremendous. He slashed and hacked his adversaries with extraordinary rapidity and severity. He took large views, and had immense confidence both in the resources of the English nation and the stability of the English aristocracy. Give up America, he would say, and you will derive twice the profit from a grateful ally that you would from an unwilling dependent. He lent his name to the wildest schemes of Reform, which he laughed at in his sleeve, declaring that they could never hurt his order. There was nothing mean or timid in his character; and but for his private excesses he would probably have stood nearly at the head of that long list of worthies which Whiggism numbers in its ranks. Making every deduction, however, he was still a great man, and he lived in great times; and although the legion of memoirs and epistolary correspondence relating to this period which have issued from the press during the last twenty years has familiarised us with its character, we still turn with unabated interest to those curious and

stormy scenes—to Lord North upon the Treasury Bench, fat, witty, and imperturbable—to Mr. Burke on the opposite ones, now sublimely eloquent, and now hurling a volume at the head of the provoking Premier—to that memorable evening when the snow was on the ground, and the fallen minister, who had unexpectedly announced his resignation, passed out to the only carriage in waiting through a shivering throng of his enemies, reminding them with a smile "what it was to be in the secret." We see shortly afterwards the new ministry coming in, looking awkward in their swords and full dresses, to which twelve long years of opposition had made them strangers; and we glow with excitement as we watch the fierce struggle of 1783, when a young statesman in his twenty-fifth year alone defied the united efforts of Fox and North, with a majority of the House of Commons at their back.

Charles Fox was born in the year 1749, and the few necessary details of his family we may as well give in his lordship's own words:

Sir Stephen Fox, the father of the first Lord Holland, and the grandfather of Charles James Fox, held several subordinate offices in the reigns of Charles II. and William III. He was of humble origin, owed his introduction at court to Lord Percy, his promotion to Lord Clarendon, his favour with Charles II. to his punctuality in business, and his rise in the world under different sovereigns to his diligence and integrity. He married a second time at the advanced age of seventy-seven, and by his second marriage had two sons, who were made peers by the titles of Ilchester and Holland. He was by principle a Tory, and by affection a Jacobite.

Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, was a man of great parts, loose morals, more fond of money than of power, warm in his domestic attachments, jovial in his manners, an able debater, a corrupt politician.

Devoted to the party of Sir Robert Walpole, he was, by the favour of the Duke of Newcastle, made Secretary of State, with the lead of the House of Commons. But he was not entrusted with the patronage, and he thought himself unequal to the double task of managing the House of Commons and conducting public affairs in a difficult time. He therefore withdrew to the less conspicuous but lucrative office of Paymaster of the Forces, which in time of war yielded thirty, forty, and even fifty thousand pounds in one year to its fortunate possessor. He married against the will of her father, Lady Caroline Lennox, the daughter of the Duke of Richmond. The Duke's repugnance to this connexion has been attributed to family pride, but other reasons may have weighed with him. For Henry Fox had not only been embarrassed in his circumstances, but by his notorious want of principle, as well as of fortune, must have alarmed the parents of a young lady who was among the noblest and fairest of the land.

After following Mr. Pitt for some years as Paymaster, Mr. Fox was fixed upon by Lord Bute as the ablest leader he could find to defend the peace of Paris. In order to do this he deserted the Duke of Cumberland, with whom he was then connected, and again became Secretary of State. He has been accused of an extent of corruption and intimidation with a view to obtain a majority for the peace unequalled in the history of the House of Commons. But this is probably an exaggeration. He stipulated for a peerage with the rank of earl as the reward of his success; a barony was given him, but the earldom was withheld. When Lord Bute, being reproached by Mr. Fox with this breach of faith, said, "It was only a pious fraud," Lord Holland quickly replied, "I perceive the fraud, my Lord, but not the piety." Lord Holland was forced by the Grenville ministry to resign the Pay-Office; the rest of his life was passed in some favour with the Court, but in no ostensible position in office, or in the House of Lords. A singular remark is quoted of his dying hours, which at least shows composure and good humour. "If Mr. Selwyn calls again," he said to his servant, "let him in; if I am alive, I shall be very glad to see him, and, if I am dead, he will be very glad to see me!"

The "accuser" here alluded to is, we suppose, Lord Macaulay, who, in his second essay on Chatham, observes with characteristic audacity: "Bute was made to compre-

"hend that the ministry could be saved only by practising "the tactics of Walpole to an extent at which Walpole him- "self would have stared. The Pay-Office was turned into a "mart for votes. Hundreds of members were closeted there "with Fox, and, as there is too much reason to believe, de- "parted carrying with them the wages of infamy. It was "affirmed by persons who had the best opportunities of ob- "taining information, that twenty-five thousand pounds were "thus paid away in a single morning."

In 1758 Fox went to Eton, where he remained till 1764. During this period he visited the Continent with his father, and before he was fifteen was familiar with the vices of manhood. After the exciting occupations of gambling at Spa and intriguing at Paris, school life, we should think, must have seemed rather slow, and even Horace a bore. Lord John tells us that on his return he was laughed at by the boys, who probably disbelieved his stories, and soon after flogged by the masters, who found that he neglected his exercises. Yet he was not sufficiently mature or sufficiently sensitve to resent the indignity as some lads would have done; and when he went to Oxford in 1764, the effect of this early dissipation seems in great measure to have vanished. He read hard, mathematics as well as classics, and acquired a thorough familiarity with the latter, to which the simplicity of his style and his numerous and apt allusions sufficiently testify. It was about this time that Fox's mother paid a visit to Lady Chatham, and predicted of William Pitt, then only eight years old, that he would be "a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lived."

Fox left Oxford in 1766, and after travelling about a

year and a half, returned to England in the autumn of 1768. In the month of May following he was elected for the borough of Midhurst, and took his seat in the House of Commons in the November of that year. He made his first speech according to our present author on the 9th of March, 1769, or two months before he was elected! Such is the noble lord's carelessness or inaccuracy. But before proceeding with his parliamentary career we will pause upon the threshold to inquire among what kind of politicians and public men the young orator now found himself.

The complete demoralisation of the great Whig body which forty years of power had induced, and its division into those cliques or connexions which have already been noticed in this volume, alone enabled George III. to carry out his Tory views. The Grenvilles, the Russells, and the Pelhams were jealous of each other, and Pitt was jealous of them all. By judiciously taking advantage of these divisions, the King was able to enjoy a much greater share of power than had fallen to the lot of any English sovereign in the eighteenth century. And though he was several times driven from his position by a combined effort of the oligarchy, yet he always recovered it in the end; and that he was able to maintain Mr. Pitt in office in 1784, is the best proof that he had effected a real and permanent change.

Newcastle, as he was the greatest pillar of the old system, so he was the first to fall irrecoverably under the new one. But the pear was not yet ripe. Bute, who had destroyed him, was in turn compelled to yield to George Grenville,

who received for a time the support of the Bedford Whigs. But their own feuds, and the incessant efforts of the King to form an independent party, were enough to prevent any Whig ministry from holding its ground long. George made use of Lord Rockingham to turn out Grenville, whose prosy harangues had wearied him to death, and whose dictatorial insolence he never forgave. But the Rockingham party could not stand alone. Pitt refused to coalesce, because he differed from the Marquis on America, and perhaps also because he began to think himself the real master of the situation. Ten years before, he doubtless would have been so. But when his second administration was formed, his intellect was on the wane. He soon began to absent himself from Parliament, and the Government virtually fell into the hands of the Duke of Grafton, the fifth Prime Minister within the space of eight years. Grafton, too, resigned in January, 1770; and then the King's triumph was complete. Lord North became minister, unfettered by "connexions," and George III. became King, unfettered by a minister.

No impartial mind can doubt that for the success of his policy the King was mainly indebted to the Whigs themselves. The unanswerable proof, afforded by the mere personal nature of their feuds, that they were no longer devoted to the furtherance of great principles, but were wrangling only over the distribution of the plunder, must have disgusted the purer and better part of both Parliament and the nation; while practical members of the House of Commons must have begun to ask themselves what was to be gained by supporting a party which could not

guarantee them office for two sessions together. Wedderburne was an instance of the latter sort of men; the majority of the country gentlemen of the former.

It was just at this moment that Fox entered Parliament, and within a month of Lord North's elevation became one of the Lords of the Admiralty. Lord John Russell attributes this conduct to a perverse admiration of the Court. We should rather attribute it to a natural aversion for the Whigs. Nothing is more likely than that a young man of Fox's temperament should catch up eagerly all that was either novel or noble in the Tory system; and that there was something of each in it is obvious. If Fox was, as Lord John Russell thinks, an imitator of Lord Bolingbroke in private life, nothing is more probable than that he should for a while have imitated him also in public life. George III. had a good share of native sagacity, as events had most thoroughly proved, but he was the last man in his kingdom to comprehend a character like Fox. When a youthful politician, of his rank and genius, had once stated in Parliament that Lord North was "a minister whose general conduct he so much approved, and whose *political principles he admired;* a minister who, with unexampled resolution, had stood forth in the most critical and dangerous moment to free his country from that anarchy and confusion into which it was about to be plunged by factious and ill-designing men;" everything else should have been given unto him. In dismissing Mr. Fox for an obnoxious vote, we are not certain that George III. did not lose a valuable and

lasting adherent, as he certainly made for himself a bitter and uncompromising enemy.

The immediate cause and manner of Fox's dismissal was in this wise, though he had previously given offence by his motion on the Royal Marriage Bill:

Within little more than a year of his acceptance of office, on a question of committing Woodfall the printer to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Fox burst out against the Press and the City, and moved that Woodfall be committed to Newgate. Lord North promised his support, tried to retract, owned himself bound to vote with Fox if he persisted, and finally was dragged off by his junior Lord of the Treasury in a minority of 68 to 152. The King noticed the transaction in the following terms:

"I am greatly *incensed* at the presumption of Charles Fox in forcing you to vote with him last night; but approve much of your making your friends vote in the majority. Indeed, that young man has so thoroughly cast off every principle of common honour and honesty, that he must become as contemptible as he is odious. I hope you will let him know that you are not insensible of his conduct towards you."

On the 24th of February, Charles Fox was dismissed from the Board of Treasury. It is said that on this occasion Lord North wrote him the following laconic note: "His Majesty has thought proper to order a new Commission of Treasury to be made out, in which I do not see you name.—NORTH."

Lord North was now at the head of what at the present day is so much talked of and so little understood, "a strong government." But "a strong government," says Lord John, "which overleaps wisdom and violates justice, is one of the worst evils that can befal a country." He here, however, falls into the identical fallacy which had betrayed Bolingbroke in the treatise already mentioned. For who is to determine what wisdom and justice are? But to pro-

ceed—Fox's attitude towards the American war was sensible and consistent throughout. He was clear of all the miserable intrigues and contradictory legislation of the previous ten years. He had taken no part in the ill-judged Stamp Act of Grenville, or the futile compromise of Rockingham; who at once irritated the colonists by his Declaratory Act, and emboldened them by yielding everything which made the Declaration real. This was the shoal upon which the Rockingham Cabinet was wrecked. Mr. Pitt, who had joined this party in their opposition to the Stamp Act, refused his adhesion to the new ministry unless the principle of taxation were surrendered. But here Burke and Rockingham were inexorable, and matters were left to take their course. Fox, however, was unencumbered by any of these reminiscences. And it may be that the comparatively free line he was enabled to take upon this question, no less than the influence which his superior debating powers had acquired for him, may have conduced to the high position which he occupied at the dissolution of the North administration. There can be no doubt, however, of the injury then done to Mr. Burke, though at the time he bore up against it nobly. It is in vain for "the Revolution Families" to try to shake off the stigma which their treatment of this illustrious man has fixed upon them. It may be that Burke's exclusion from the second Chatham administration was principally owing to Chatham himself. But then, after all, Chatham was not the man to have promoted him. He belonged to a different school of politicians. But why was not Burke higher in Lord Rockingham's own cabinet in '66, and again in '82? Why was he permitted

to sink into the background during the latter days of the North administration, and actually "distrusted" by his friends, though he was almost the only statesman of mark who from his entrance into political life had been true to one party? Lord John Russell admits, though apparently with some idea that it is still an open question, that Rockingham would have done well in 1782 to have given Burke a seat in the cabinet; and complacently adds, "that with Mr. Fox for his leader, he might soon have learned the necessary caution." But is this the way to speak of a man who had been the saviour of the whole Whig party, and who elsewhere is entitled by Lord John himself, "the pastor and master of Mr. Fox?" No doubt there was in Burke a deficiency of the practical element. He could not condescend to the difficulties of ordinary minds; and, when they lagged behind him, was apt to grow angry and contemptuous. "Burke," said Fox himself, at a later period, "was often right, but then he was right too soon;" a fault which, of all others, is the most damaging under a system of representative government. Still for all this, and twice as much as all this, the splendid services which Burke had rendered to his party were a full equivalent. Nor did they sufficiently consider how much of this very irritability and violence was due to the neglect and ingratitude of those, whose pride it should have been to share his confidence, to aid in his advancement, and to win his love.

Violence, however, in those days was not confined to Edmund Burke, as witness the following:

Mr. Fox had made a vehement attack on Mr. Adam, who had

changed from the Opposition to the Ministerial side, and had given as a reason for his change, that, although the Ministers were not very competent, no persons more competent were to be found among their opponents. Mr. Fox, confounding mental power with moral rectitude, described the Minister as turning round on his new defender and saying to him, "Begone! begone, wretch! who delightest in libelling mankind, confounding virtue and vice, and insulting the man whom thou pretendest to defend, by saying to his face that he certainly is infamous, but that there others still more so."

Mr. Adam, having in vain endeavoured to obtain an explanation of this speech from Mr. Fox, to be inserted in the newspapers, sent Major Humberston to arrange the particulars of a hostile meeting. The meeting accordingly took place in Hyde Park, at eight o'clock in the morning of the 29th of November. After the ground had been measured, Mr. Adam desired Mr. Fox to fire, to which Mr. Fox replied, "Sir, I have no quarrel with you, do you fire." Mr. Adam fired; Mr. Fox then fired without effect. Upon this the seconds, Colonel Fitz-Patrick and Major Humberston, interfered, asking Mr. Adam if he was satisfied. Mr. Adam replied, "Will Mr. Fox declare he meant no personal attack upon my character?" Upon which Mr. Fox said, "This is no place for apologies," and desired Mr. Adam to go on. Mr. Adam fired his second pistol without effect. Mr. Fox fired his remaining pistol in the air, and said that, as the affair was ended, he had no difficulty in declaring he meant no more personal affront to Mr. Adam than he did to either of the other gentlemen present. Mr. Adam replied: "Sir, you have behaved like a man of honour." Mr. Fox then mentioned that he believed himself wounded. On opening his waistcoat, it was found that Mr. Adam's first ball had taken effect, but that the wound was very slight. The wits of Opposition said that Mr. Adam had used Government powder, notorious for being deficient in strength. No men were better friends in after life than Mr. Fox and Mr. Adam. Mr. Adam had that openness of temper and cordiality of disposition which peculiarly suited Mr. Fox. Indeed, of all Lord North's adherents, he and Lord North's son were singular in remaining faithful to Mr. Fox during the French war.

The "Parliamentary sense" of the English language can be stretched no further than this—the wretch who delights in libelling mankind and confounding virtue and vice, is

told that no personal affront is intended to him. It is only in Parliament that he is supposed to indulge himself in these his favourite amusements. We do not think the man who used these words had much right to insinuate a want of caution or courtesy in other people.

The American War, as is well known, broke down Lord North's administration. On the 20th of March, 1782, his resignation took place, and was followed by eighteen months of parliamentary confusion, till the sceptre was finally grasped by the firm hand of William Pitt. The first administration was, of course, headed by Lord Rockingham, with Shelburne and Fox as Secretaries of State, and Burke nowhere. Fox and Shelburne early began to differ, the latter being honoured with more of the royal confidence than was agreeable to his colleague, besides being detected in carrying on a separate correspondence with the French Court, in relation to the Peace of Versailles. In July, Lord Rockingham died, and then these half-smothered animosities burst out into a flame. The King and his party insisted on making Lord Shelburne Premier, and Fox and his party at once went into Opposition. Shelburne made Pitt, then only twenty-four, his Chancellor of the Exchequer, and prepared to encounter the formidable coalition which Fox had unwisely effected with his old Tory friend Lord North.

On the 21st of February, 1783, a motion censuring the Treaty of Versailles was carried against the ministry by a majority of 17, and Lord Shelburne at once resigned. He was the King's favourite minister, and with all our high opinion of Lord North's character, we cannot but regret that he should have taken so prominent a part in thwarting

the personal wishes of the sovereign, who, whatever his public errors, had invariably treated himself with marked confidence and kindness. Nor was the occasion one which demanded the sacrifice of such sentiments. For the peace which he joined in condemning he was virtually answerable himself, and the minister he helped to overthrow was the representative of the very same system which for twelve years he had administered. Had eleven short months been enough to convince him of his error, it would at least have been wise not to discredit his conversion by so hasty an attempt to resume the power he had lost. The coalition, in fact, was from one point of view or other, disgraceful to all parties, and ended as it justly deserved to do, after a short-lived gleam of sunshine, in the complete discomfiture of its authors.

Of this coalition administration, Lord John has very little to say in vindication. One important lesson may however be learned from the fate which overtook the authors of that ill-judged transaction; namely, that the people of this country are incapable of appreciating those subtleties of reasoning by which statesmen justify such proceedings to themselves; and that they judge of public men for the most part on tangible and general grounds. Fox never regained the popularity which he lost by this movement, though a hundred good reasons for it might be adduced by his particular friends. The broad fact could not be got over. He had agreed to fight side by side with a man of whom he disapproved not only the policy, but the principles, when it became clear to him that he could obtain office on no other terms. This was the only light in which

the public could be brought to see it. The conductor of the American War and the champion of prerogative, was embraced by the opponent of both, when the far more important object of 5000*l.* a year was to be gained by their agreement. We do not mean either that Fox or North were really actuated by such motives; but the people will never believe that compacts of this kind are entirely free from such considerations, and those who imitate the ambition of Mr. Fox, must expect to incur the same punishment. We are very far from thinking ill of Mr. Fox; we believe that nature intended him for a statesman of the first rank, but circumstances interfered with her intention. His early life, and the companions to whom he was introduced while yet in his teens, had done their work on his character by the time he was called upon to take a leading part in public affairs. A disposition to undervalue the scruples of ordinary men, is one of the first products of a life of early dissipation. But all experience shows us that he who begins by despising the obligations by which his inferiors are bound, is very likely to end in a state of general uncertainty about all obligations whatever. His moral vigour is dimmed, and his resisting force abated. So it was with Charles Fox; nor were the politicians among whom his early experience was formed at all calculated to inspire him with a respect for political principles, or faith in political pledges. The sordid and selfish intrigues which made the first ten years of George III.'s reign the most disgraceful period of our parliamentary history had at length been succeeded by a vigorous and permanent administration; yet after twelve years of strong government, this country

found herself at a lower pitch in the European system than she had occupied since the Revolution. It would seem, then, that neither Whigs or Tories were any longer able to produce a great man, who was at once superior to faction and equal to the highest duties of government. Something like a contempt for all his contemporaries must have inspired Fox at this period: a scorn of the mysteries of statesmanship, and a distrust of political virtue. When, after breaking up the strong and well-cemented Tory phalanx which had supported Lord North, he found himself suddenly thwarted by a mere boy,—when something told him, in spite of himself, that in the youthful Chancellor of the Exchequer he had encountered a genius equal to his own, combined with a native aptitude for government of a far higher order,—his astonishment and mortification must have been unbounded. Something must be done, and that speedily, to put down this rising rival, and unfortunately Fox chose the wrong thing. There was yet one man in the Whig ranks with whom, if Fox could have made up his mind to co-operate earnestly and faithfully, he might possibly have been enabled to triumph over the young William Pitt, and change the history of the Whig party. We say "possibly," but we do not think it probable that even that combination would have succeeded. There was evidently a reaction in the public mind in favour of prerogative *as such*. However the King might appear to those who knew him intimately, to the public at large he was the most honest public man of the day. That their sovereign should wish to exercise some share of real power had

not yet come to seem strange or intolerable to the British people. They were still highly monarchical. George III. also exhibited in his own person all those domestic virtues which Englishmen prize, and in which the Whig leaders were deficient; while the growing alliance between Fox and the Prince of Wales was sufficient to disgust a people who still retained a deep sense of filial obligations. On the other hand, the Whigs were no longer identified with any great popular movements. Jacobitism was dead; Parliamentary Reform was in its infancy; Roman Catholic Emancipation was eminently an unpopular idea, and the King's known opposition to it only served to strengthen public confidence in his own personal authority. Under these circumstances we repeat it is doubtful even if the closest union between Fox and Edmund Burke could have rehabilitated the Whig party, or prolonged for any considerable time their lease of administration. But we maintain that this was Fox's only chance; and that, in forming his coalition with North, he was taking the one step above all others calculated to seal the doom of his party, and to convince the public, once for all, of their total want of principle, patriotism, or loyalty. That he should have taken such a step as this we attribute to the moral callousness which his early education had induced, to the contempt for public men with which recent events had inspired him, and to that confidence in his own character which great social popularity has a tendency to produce in all men, but especially in men like Fox. That colloquial geniality, that fatal *bonhomie* which made him the hero of the supper, the

gaming-table, or the race-course, led him, as it has done many another man, into a false security. It was impossible that a man who had so many devoted personal friends *could* do anything dishonourable. Would ——, and ——, and ——, associate with him if he were a fellow capable of sordid and selfish ambition? It was impossible. Many a man by a similar train of reasoning becomes, as it were, a sort of practical Antinomian; and believing it impossible for himself to do wrong, does it right and left. Such we consider to be the best excuse that can be made for Charles Fox at this period of his career. But if his error was a grave one, his punishment was equal to the offence. Exclusion from office for the remainder of his life; the loss of his oldest and dearest political friendship, and the total break-up of that once powerful and popular party which he had hoped to lead to victory, were more than an atonement for this one most unfortunate transgression.

The conduct of political parties during the period to which this volume is confined, is narrated by Lord John Russell with great frankness and fairness, and his narrative is interspersed with remarks, which, coming from a statesman in his present position, are both curious and instructive. Thus of coalition, he says:

Nor is it true, as Mr. Fox seems to have more than once thought, that by combining the chief leaders of weight in debate and experience in affairs, a body might be formed of sufficient power to overcome all resistance and defy all competition. Where there is a public sentiment, especially if that sentiment is shared or inspired by the sovereign, there will not be wanting in this country, nurse as it is of free discussion, men capable of becoming the organs and the leaders of a popular and powerful party. Thus Mr. Pitt, in 1783 and 1784, without a colleague in the House of Commons, defied Mr. Fox, Lord North, Mr. Burke, Mr. Sheri-

dan, and Mr. Erskine. Thus, Mr. Perceval, in 1807, defeated the coalition of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, and led his fanatical majority with undaunted spirit and unquestionable success. Eighteen years of power consolidated the victorious party of Mr. Pitt; twenty years of Tory administration followed the triumph of Mr. Perceval.

This is a most important admission from the present Foreign Secretary.

Again, of Mr. Pitt, he says:

Thus, in the course of little more than three years from Mr. Pitt's acceptance of office as First Lord of the Treasury, great financial and commercial reforms had been accomplished. By laying on a sufficient amount of taxes to meet the expenditure of the year, public credit had been raised and confirmed. By just economy a surplus of a million had been secured on the balance-sheet, and this sum had been strictly appropriated to the diminution of the national debt. Commerce and manufactures had been promoted by a treaty with France, founded on principles mutually beneficial. For the further benefit of trade, a dark and confused chaos of duties had been penetrated by the light of order and simplicity. The nation, overcoming its difficulties, and rising buoyant from its depression, began rapidly to increase its wealth, to revive its spirit, and renew its strength.

Such was the work of Mr. Pitt, now no longer the minister of the Court, but of the nation. The cry of secret influence, and the imputation of his being the organ of an unseen power, was heard less and less as the resources of his powerful understanding developed their energies and ripened their fruits. During this period the conduct of Mr. Fox, though not wanting in ability and in eloquence, betrayed the deficiencies of a mind ready for the debate of the day, but not stored with the reasonings of economical writers, or directed by an enlarged view of the liberal policy of a mercantile people. Whether, while embracing the prejudices of manufacturers, he opposed the Irish propositions, or, while listening to national animosities, he denounced the commercial treaty with France, he displayed on either question a mind whose notions of commerce were erroneous, and whose patriotism fostered national jealousy, in place of cultivating national friendship.

So, too, at page 213:

At the end of the American War the finances of Great Britain and France were seriously deranged. In five years William Pitt, by judicious retrenchment, by imposts cheerfully borne, and by allowing the energy of the nation free scope, had restored public credit and confirmed public order. A popular sovereign reigned over a contented people, who filled the public coffers and supported a monarchy which they loved.

The following sketch of Mirabeau is above Lord John's average:

Mirabeau was a man of violent passion, of debauched habits—the product of a despotic court and a corrupt state of society; often imprisoned in the Bastille, constantly involved in debt, running from one mistress to another, the slave of his necessities and his impulses, without fixed principles of any kind, no sense of personal dignity, no scruples, no integrity. But he was a man of genius; he had conceived the idea of a monarchy tempered by liberty, and he was eager to adapt the institutions of England to his own country. He was bold in council, eloquent in the Assembly; he had a natural mastery over the minds of those whom he addressed, and he soon obtained a wonderful ascendency over the people of France. He never yielded his opinion to the vague theories of philosophers, or the senseless clamour of a mob. In his speeches he defended, with admirable reason and force, the royal prerogative of peace and war. He marked with ability and precision the outlines of a representative constitution. He was the true apostle of monarchy as it is understood in England.

The subjoined will show Lord John's opinion on the "balance of power," and may serve perhaps as some indication how far he is to be relied upon as an advocate of non-intervention:

It will be seen from these extracts how fully Mr. Fox recognised the doctrine of the balance of power as a guarantee for the security and interests of Great Britain. In fact, there are but few and short steps between the maintenance of that balance and the insecurity of our national independence. The balance of power can only be overthrown by the preponderance of one great State; a great preponderant State

would threaten the independence of all its neighbours, and Great Britain would only have a choice between submission and war. So that the words "balance and power," which appear to many minds to convey an idol theory, or a flimsy disguise, do in fact mean the maintenance of the liberties and independence of the British people.

We have now to turn to some passages of a more questionable character. On the affair of Mrs. Fitzherbert, Lord John quotes a letter of Fox to the Prince of Wales, in which he says:

The sum of my humble advice, nay, of my most earnest entreaty, is this—that your Royal Highness would not think of marrying till you can marry legally. When that time comes you must judge for yourself; and no doubt you will take into consideration both what is due to private honour and your public station. In the mean while, a mock marriage (for it can be no other) is neither honourable for any of the parties, nor, with respect to your Royal Highness, even safe. This appears so clear to me that, if I were *Mrs. Fitzherbert's father or brother*, I would advise her not by any means to agree to it, and to prefer any other species of connexion with you to one leading to so much misery and mischief."

The extraordinary moral obliquity of Fox's mind could not be better shown than by this piece of advice: "If I were Mrs. Fitzherbert's *father or brother*"—I would recommend her to become your mistress! Making all due allowance for the circumstances of this particular case, and the general laxity of the period, we must confess that in our estimation this letter is no degree short of infamous. The lowest depravity of the Court of Louis XV. did not go beyond brothers and fathers recommending their sisters and daughters to yield to his Majesty's solicitations. Yet, here was the leader of that political party in England supposed to be specially inimical to the vices of courts, gravely

assuring the heir apparent that a sister's virtue was not to be weighed for a moment against the danger of a disputed succession. That Fox was capable of uttering such a sentiment as this, explains much of his career, and proves how deeply the lessons of his youth had eaten into his natural powers of discriminating between right and wrong. Lord John, however, merely observes:

> It has been said with truth that this letter, while it discouraged an illegal marriage, tended to favour an illicit connexion. It must be confessed that Mr. Fox and his friends were not at all more scrupulous on this head than Henry IV. of France, Charles II., the Duke of Grafton, Lord Sandwich, and other statesmen of the preceding age, or the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York of his own time.

We have no sympathy with excessive prudery. The vices of private men are sometimes the virtues of kings. It may be better for his people that a sovereign should make a mistress of his inferior than a queen. But that does not prove that it was right for the inferior to be made so. Because it might have been unwise for the Prince to marry Mrs. Fitzherbert, that would have been no justification in a brother who should have advised her to dispense with the ceremony. There was nothing worse in Louis XV.th's connexion with Madame Du Barry than with any other woman; but mankind have been unanimous in the detestation they have evinced for her relations. There would have been nothing worse in Charles II.'s adoption of Alice Bridgenorth into his harem than of any other girl; but would this diminish the criminality of the uncle who took her there? Lord John has made a sad mistake in his comment on this particular letter: he had better have said nothing about it, but if he said anything, it should

scarcely have been a half-humorous comparison between Fox and other profligates, who, after all, never did what Fox says he would have done, namely, sacrifice a daughter's honour to save a patron's crown.

With a brief comment on one other passage, we must conclude:

> The separation of Mr. Burke from his party was a natural consequence of the position he had assumed in his book. The breach of friendship with Mr. Fox was an effect of his own wilful intemperance. But it was no momentary passion which confirmed and widened the breach. Mr. Burke did not rest till he had estranged from Mr. Fox many of his best friends, and broken into fragments "the great and firm body" of the English Whigs.

Now this we totally deny. Mr. Burke remained to the last a consistent 1688 Whig. There were no Whig principles at work in the French Revolution, or if there were, they were very speedily extinguished. But it was necessary, as it has often been at other times, that the party in opposition should keep up a distinction between themselves and the party in office, though there is no real difference remaining. The exigency of the situation makes this hypocrisy excusable. But whenever it is made the basis of action, it is sure to lead to a very considerable secession from the ranks of the party which adopt it. Men not immediately interested in obtaining office, and who have all their lives thought more of principles than of power, will be certain to revolt from such a policy, however indispensable to party purposes. When this state of affairs came about between 1790-1800, Burke was the first to set the example of fidelity to principles at the cost of apostasy to party. If the only distinction left between Whig and Tory

was approval or disapproval of the French Revolution, if all other differences had now been expunged, he would not be the slave of a mere name—and they might call him a Tory if they liked. On all other points he was still the same. And if his old friends chose to ignore everything else but this one point, they might do so. He would die in the constitutional creed of which he had lived a supporter, and had embalmed in his immortal writings. Posterity has respected, and, for the most part, endorsed his motives, while the subsequent history of France has amply proved his wisdom.

MR. CANNING.*

In the year 1831, the author of the present volume, who was for some years the private secretary of the celebrated statesman whose career he has undertaken to depict, gave to the world a "Political Life" of Mr. Canning from his acceptance of the Foreign Office in 1822 till his death in 1827. As the chief, if not the exclusive, object of that work was to vindicate the foreign policy of Mr. Canning, we find in it comparatively few traces of his influence upon other great questions of the day—the Corn Laws, Roman Catholic Emancipation, and the Reform Bill. With the scope and composition of the Political Life we have no fault to find. Restricted, with the exception of a few months, to the period during which Mr. Canning presided at the Foreign Office, it would naturally and easily have fallen within the limits imposed upon it, even had no such specific intention actuated the biographer. But we confess to a feeling of disappointment, when we discovered that, in the

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* George Canning and his Times. By Augustus Granville Stapleton. London: J. W. Parker and Son, West Strand.

volume now before us, all those important questions of domestic policy with which Mr. Canning's name is more or less associated, were treated with the same brevity. It is not indeed surprising that any man whose youth and early manhood were passed in the intimate society of Mr. Canning should have habituated himself to elevate foreign affairs above every other political consideration. The eloquence, wisdom, and honesty which adorned and dignified the foreign policy of this country during the last five years of Mr. Canning's life, not less than the critical character of the events then taking place both in Europe and America, combined to give a prominence to this department of affairs, which for twenty years after the Reform Bill was monopolised by domestic politics. And at the same political stage at which the death of his patron left him, Mr. Stapleton has, we presume, continued ever since. Foreign affairs are still not merely the central, but the engrossing subject of his pen. But notwithstanding the revived interest in the subject which the last six years have created, and its paramount importance in the present instance, we are, we repeat, sorry that it is still the Foreign Minister, rather than George Canning, to whom we are again introduced. Mr. Canning had a mind which embraced every department of politics. His views on Roman Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform were as characteristic of his statesmanship as his views upon Columbia or Buenos Ayres; and they are worth examining, not, of course, for their practical importance in the present day, but for the sake of understanding how these apparently uncongenial opinions were combined into one consistent

political theory by so powerful and disciplined an intellect. By studying the domestic views of Mr. Canning in conjunction with his foreign politics we obtain a most interesting view of his political philosophy as a whole, and are able to trace with considerable precision the influence of the French Revolution upon a system of politics conceived in the school of Mr. Pitt. A mind trained to the consideration of political problems, and careful enough to have registered such general expressions of opinion as Mr. Canning must frequently have let drop in the intercourse of private life, enlarged by the experience of nearly thirty years, and acquainted with the results of those changes which Canning either opposed or supported, might have produced a most interesting volume of political philosophy. More than that, there are few statesmen who have left a more brilliant reputation behind them, fewer still who, having left it, are to the same extent the subject of controversy. The opinion of Mr. Canning's statesmanship is still not what it ought to be. His biographer should have raised it to its proper level. The opinion of his integrity and his judgment is still fluctuating. His biographer should have fixed it for ever. A thorough investigation of his conduct to the Tory party was as much due to his own memory as demanded by the subsequent conduct of other statesmen. These are questions of unrivalled and living interest, and far more worthy of discussion than, for instance, the trial of Queen Caroline, to which a most disproportionate space is here allotted.

Having said thus much in depreciation of Mr. Stapleton's work, we are bound to add that it is not without consider-

able merit. It is neatly written, and very temperate; and, allowing for the condensation of materials to which the author must have forced himself, each separate transaction is clearly and cleverly detailed. We think, however, that Mr. Stapleton has made a mistake in dividing his volume into "Transactions," if we may so speak. We are, by this means, tossed backwards and forwards through the thirty-three years over which Canning's parliamentary career extended in the most perplexing and uncomfortable fashion. We find ourselves transported from the verge of his grave back again even to the days of Mr. Perceval; and forward again to the trial of Queen Caroline, before we have recovered our breath. The reason of this is, that Mr. Stapleton takes up some one topic, such as Parliamentary Reform, or Emancipation, and follows out Mr. Canning's relations towards it to the end of his life, without interruption. But this system, which would be all very well in a series of essays, is, in our opinion, nearly as fatal to the value, as it is undoubtedly fatal to the interest, of biography. We do not merely want to know what a man thought, but also how he came to think it; and this we can never hope to learn by merely seeing his opinions spread out before us, numbered, named, and classified like specimens of dried plants.

We shall endeavour to extract from Mr. Stapleton's volume as much as we can in the shape of political matter which seems likely to be interesting at the present moment. But before doing so, we will briefly run over the political and ministerial changes in which Mr. Canning was involved,

supplying from other sources the gaps left vacant by Mr. Stapleton.

Mr. Canning was born in London on the 11th of April, 1770. His father was George Canning, a barrister, and literary man about town, who lived on an allowance of 150*l.* a year from his family, and what he could add to it by his pen. His profession brought him in nothing, and he appears to have formed one of the regular members of the working literary fraternity, though his productions were not such as to make him a name with the public. As a bookseller's hack, journalist, and reviewer, he did not, however, make enough to keep himself and his wife out of debt, even with the aid of the 150*l.* aforesaid. His debts were once paid by his father, on condition that he should join with him in cutting off the entail of the estate to which he was heir. But he was soon in the same difficulties again, and he ultimately died without having, in any respect, bettered his position. His wife, who was a Miss Costello, and a young lady of the most respectable connexions, as well as a very pretty woman, was thus left totally destitute, the 150*l.* being no longer continued to her, and was obliged to go on the stage for a livelihood. She was twice married after her first husband's death: once to an actor named Reddish, and again to a tradesman of Plymouth, named Hunn; neither of them, however, left her any money, and it was her son's first object, after he had made a start in life, to remove his mother from the stage. This, however, he was not enabled to accomplish till the year 1801, when he contrived to have his pension of 500*l.*

a year settled on Mrs. Hunn instead of on himself. Thus for five years was witnessed the unparalleled spectacle in England of an Under-Secretary of State whose mother was performing at provincial theatres while her son was electrifying the British House of Commons. She did not live to see George Prime Minister, though she missed it by little more than a fortnight; dying, curiously enough, on the very day, the 27th of March, 1827, on which Canning had an interview with George IV., resulting in his appointment to the Treasury on the 12th of April following.

Canning's family belonged to the English gentry. The elder branch is still settled at Foxcote, in Warwickshire. The younger branch migrated to Ireland, where they obtained, in 1818, the peerage of Garvagh. The statesman's grandfather was the head of the younger branch, and his third son, Stratford, the statesman's uncle, was the father of the present Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. The eldest was Canning's father, the second was the father of the first Lord Garvagh. It was the younger of his two uncles, then a merchant in the City, who took charge of young George Canning when his father died, and sent him to Eton and Oxford. His character and habits at school and college are familiar to every one. The "Microcosm," the "Union," and the "Prize Poems," in which the future minister first displayed his uncommon and precocious powers, and gratified his early ambition, are still household words among those academical aspirants who fancy, in the words of Mr. Thackeray, that Government "always has an eye on the University, where to select orators for the House of Commons."

For much of the bad oratory and worse essays which this belief still induces, Canning is, unquestionably, answerable. He was, if any man ever was, a school and college-made minister. It is certain that his Christchurch reputation attracted the notice of Mr. Pitt, still a young man himself, and still full of classic reminiscences. Nor was his knowledge of the budding orator confined to mere hearsay. He appears to have met him at the house of Lord Hawkesbury, while he was still an undergraduate, and might even then have formed his own opinion of the stuff that was in him. There was, however, one apparent impediment in the way of any engagement between them. Canning was, by association, a Whig. His uncle was a sturdy supporter of Mr. Fox; and the nephew himself, though no friend to the oligarchy, was a disciple of popular principles. Gradually, however, his opinions, without any violent change, worked round to the level of Mr. Pitt. He disliked the Whig method of government from the bottom of his heart, and so did the Tory Prime Minister. He entertained liberal commercial and constitutional theories, and so did Mr. Pitt. And, finally, the French Revolution had taught him, in common with many others, the necessity of laying aside for awhile the "rights of man," and lending his whole energies to the preservation of order. Under these circumstances, the master and the disciple were not long strangers to each other. While Canning was keeping term in Lincoln's Inn, attending debating clubs in the evening, and, no doubt, discussing his parliamentary prospects with his old chums of the Union, there came to him the message that decided his fate—Mr. Pitt

would be happy to see him. He went, he listened, and was conquered, and at the age of twenty-two, found himself in the House of Commons, representing the ministerial borough of Newport, and an enthusiastic member of the great Tory phalanx which mustered round the "pilot" of the State. At this time Mr. Pitt was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, H. Dundas Home Secretary, Lord Grenville Foreign Secretary, Loughborough Lord Chancellor, and Lord Fitzwilliam President of the Council.

Canning's maiden speech was delivered on the 31st of January, 1794, and his own description of it, conveyed in a letter to his friend Lord Boringdon, is one of the most interesting passages in Mr. Stapleton's volume. On December the 30th, of the same year, he was chosen to second the Address on the opening of Parliament for the session of 1795, and the same year he spoke again on Mr. Fox's motion for a committee on the state of the nation. It will thus be seen that he made but a sparing and cautious use of his oratorical powers during his early parliamentary career, and it was the prudence and self-command evinced by this abstinence from all effort at display which, perhaps, more than the most glittering effusions of rhetoric, confirmed Mr. Pitt's confidence in his young recruit. So well, at all events, was he satisfied with his merits, that in 1796 he offered him the Under-Secretaryship of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Grenville being the chief of the department. This was, perhaps, one of the happiest periods of Canning's life. He served under a minister in whom he had implicit confidence; whom the nation supported with

enthusiasm; and whose policy, in every respect, he cordially approved. The Tory party was at that time unanimous, powerful, and popular. Here were no party jealousies to be assuaged; no hostile chiefs to be bought over; no secret influence at work to impair the stability of the Cabinet, or the full success of their measures. The Opposition was just sufficiently strong and able to be foemen worthy of his steel, and no more. The King was heart and hand with his Government; and though our military operations were not so successful as when, at a later period, Mr. Canning had the full direction of our foreign policy, yet the three great naval victories of Camperdown, St. Vincent, and the Nile, shed their lustre on Mr. Pitt's administration, and infinitely more than compensated for our military disasters in Holland.

Canning used to say, very naturally, he wondered "what sort of times those must have been" when there were no battles and negotiations to occupy the attention of the Foreign Office, or keep alive the excitement of the public. Many of us probably feel a similar curiosity at the present moment. The Russian, Indian, and Italian wars have now restored the public mind to something like the same condition it must have been in when Canning wrote, and we again almost begin to wonder "what sort of times those must have been" when Russia and England were sworn friends. When the sickness of Turkey had not yet attracted the whole pharmacy of Europe. When Louis Philippe held sway in France, apparently immovable. And when Italy, if discontented, was still obedient and tranquil.

Previous to Pitt's resignation, *i.e.* in the year 1800,

Canning had married a Miss Scott, daughter of General Scott, and sister to the Duchess of Portland, who brought him a large fortune, and rendered him independent of place. When, after the death of Mr. Pitt, Lord Hawkesbury, who had been his Foreign Secretary, felt unequal to the task of carrying on the Government, the King, sacrificing his objections to Fox, commissioned Lord Grenville to form an administration, Canning declined to serve in it. But became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the ministry which succeeded to it in 1807. The second Portland Administration lasted only two years, but they were two memorable years, both in the history of this country and in the life of Mr. Canning. They witnessed the famous expedition to Denmark, and the seizure of the Danish fleet, by Lord Cathcart; the battle of Kioge, the first victory won by Sir Arthur Wellesley on European ground; and the opening act in the great drama of the Peninsular War; for all and each of which decisive and vigorous measures the new Foreign Secretary was responsible. To him, moreover, it was due that the experience of the short but significant campaign of 1809 was not thrown away upon this country, and that we did not allow the misfortunes of Sir John Moore to outweigh the lessons to be deduced from Roleica and Vimiera. Canning it was who from the first gave his full confidence and support to the victor of Assaye and Argaum; thoroughly adopted his policy of making the Peninsula our battle-ground with Napoleon, and when almost every other mind had determined to abandon the contest, stood firm to the necessity of renewing our exertions in Portugal. In insisting on the return of Wellington

to that country in 1809, no less than by the unremitting zeal with which he confronted his detractors throughout his earlier and less encouraging campaigns, Canning was virtually the saviour of the Peninsula. And whatever share of the laurels we thereby reaped may be due to the Home Administration, Mr. Canning is entitled to the whole of them.

In the spring of 1809, the British Government determined on sending an expedition to the Scheldt, for the purpose of seizing a large French and Dutch fleet which lay there. The expedition, which had been undertaken against the advice of Mr. Canning, failed, and then it was that the Foreign Minister, who had already differed from Lord Castlereagh on the convention of Cintra, and the conduct of Sir John Moore's campaign, intimated to the Duke of Portland that some change in the War Department was advisable. From this point we shall avail ourselves of Mr. Stapleton's narrative.

With reference to these occurrences, two charges were made against Mr. Canning: 1. That he acquiesced in the concealment from Lord Castlereagh of the change which he proposed in the Government. 2. That he allowed him to remain the minister to prepare the expedition to the Scheldt after the change had been decided on.

To these two charges the answers are brief. As to the first—Mr. Canning repeatedly pressed in the most urgent way that no concealment should be practised towards Lord Castlereagh; more than once he tendered his own resignation to enforce disclosure: further, the concealment was carried on, at the suggestion and entreaties of both the Duke of Portland and Lord Castlereagh's own particular friends in the Cabinet, and of his connexion, Lord Camden, and also with the King's sanction. "So far from desiring it, he conceived, however erroneously, Lord Camden to be the sure channel of communication to Lord Castlereagh; *and that up to a very late period he believed such communication to have been actually made.*"

This is a remarkable assertion. The truth is, the Duke of Portland, doubtless under a misapprehension, *assured Mr. Canning that the communication had actually been made to Lord Castlereagh*, and it was in reliance on the correctness of this assurance that Mr. Canning was contented to go on. Mr. Canning's regard and respect for the Duke of Portland restrained him from saying one word which would disparage his Grace's character. In his letter to Lord Camden, he says:

"No man who knows the affectionate respect and attachment which the manly and generous qualities of the Duke of Portland's mind were calculated to command, and which I invariably bore to him, will suspect me of being willing to establish my own vindication at the expense of the slightest disrespect to his memory, or prejudice to his fame."*

In this explanation, however, of his conduct on this occasion, he told me how unhappily he had been misled by the Duke.

With regard to the second charge—that he allowed Lord Castlereagh to prepare the expedition to the Scheldt after it had been determined that a change should be made; it is completely answered by the fact, that the change proposed, and with which Mr. Canning declared that he should be contented, was a "new distribution of the business of the War Department," the effect of which "new distribution would not have been to take out of Lord Castlereagh's hands the superintendence of the expedition to the Scheldt."

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On Mr. Canning's writing to the Duke of Portland to claim the fulfilment of the arrangement respecting Lord Castlereagh, to his infinite annoyance and surprise he was then "informed by the Duke, that no steps whatever had been taken by Lord Castlereagh's friends to reconcile him to the change, or to press on him for it, and that the Duke himself intended to retire." On receiving this intelligence, he at once definitely resigned (September 7), and only held office until his successor was appointed. Lord Castlereagh followed his example; and on the 19th, sent the challenge which produced the duel.

Such was the unfortunate termination, from no fault of Mr. Canning's, of his tenure of the seals of the Foreign Office. Fifteen long and eventful years elapsed before they were again confided to his custody.

* When this was written the Duke was dead.

This is the celebrated duel with Lord Castlereagh. It was fought on Putney Heath, September 21, 1809. Lord Yarmouth was the second of Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Charles Ellis of Mr. Canning. After the second fire the blood was seen to trickle through Mr. Canning's nankeen trousers, and it was found he was wounded in the thigh. He was not, however, too badly hurt to walk off the ground, and he was soon completely well. Lord Castlereagh himself had a narrow escape, the button on the right lappet of his coat having been shot off. The *Morning Chronicle* congratulated Mr. Canning "on the service he intended to his country."

In 1812, Lord Liverpool became Prime Minister, and at once made the most liberal proposals to Mr. Canning. They were declined, it is said, because Lord Castlereagh was to retain the lead of the House of Commons. Whether this was Mr. Canning's own view, or whether it was only the view on which he acted in obedience to his political friends, it was, in our opinion, a great mistake. Especially as Lord Castlereagh was willing to give Canning the Foreign Office. As a Tory, we maintain, Canning ought never to have allowed a mere point of form to prevent him from acting with Lord Liverpool. The old Tory party, however, were now the only resource, and that Administration was formed, which, with only one or two changes, lasted to within a few months of Mr. Canning's death. That party still on the whole represented a majority of the nation; the three campaigns of 1812-13 and '15, invested them with a halo of splendour; nor did any one consider how far the glories of Vittoria and Waterloo were due to

that prescient statesman who had sustained the national spirit after the slaughter of Talavera, and the retreat to Torres Vedras. Public confidence, therefore, in the Liverpool Administration was unbounded. And they continued strong enough for several years to maintain their position without any extraneous assistance. Lord Liverpool, however, had always been a firm friend of Mr. Canning, and as the latter and Lord Castlereagh were now very good friends, continued on the alert to secure for him a place in the Administration. The opportunity, however, did not occur for some years, and in the mean time Canning had accepted an appointment which provoked the most violent personal attack upon him which he ever experienced.

In the autumn of 1814, after Napoleon had gone to Elba, Mr. Canning, on account of the feeble health of his eldest son, had made up his mind to pass the winter at Lisbon. When Lord Liverpool learnt his intentions, on consultation with Lord Castlereagh, they determined to offer and to press upon him the post of ambassador at Lisbon—at the same time that offices were given to Mr. Huskisson, Lord Binning, and others of his friends. Mr. Canning accepted. By those who wish to look into particulars, and to find an example of how a noble and generous nature can defend itself when unjustly assailed with calumny, Mr. Canning's speech on the Lisbon embassy will be read with admiration and interest. Nine years after the event, when travelling to Ickworth, he said to me, "I consider my having accepted the Lisbon embassy as a great political mistake; in all probability I should have had the most influential post in the Government in the House of Commons long before, had I not fallen into that error. I laboured hard to avoid accepting the appointment, but it was so urged upon me by the King's Government, that I thought I had not the moral right, as a public man, to refuse it. If, therefore, the thing were now, with past experience, to be done over again, I should act the same part, and, conscious of right, I must brave the consequences."

On what data Mr. Canning based the probability here spoken of, that he would have superseded Lord Castlereagh at the Foreign Office before the death of the latter, is now mere matter of conjecture. But from the charge brought against him in Parliament he vindicated himself triumphantly. A message had been sent home from Lord Strangford, the English ambassador at Brazil, to the effect that the King of Portugal would like to return to Europe under British protection. The ministers determined to appoint an ambassador extraordinary to receive him at Lisbon, and Mr. Canning was selected for the post. It turned out, after Mr. Canning's arrival at his post, that the King had changed his mind. But it was urged by Mr. Lambton, the mover of a vote of censure on the appointment, that it had been known all along that he never intended to come; that the appointment, therefore, was a simple job; and the salary (14,000*l.* a year), under any circumstances, excessive. Mr. Canning's reply to this attack is one of his very happiest efforts. The skill with which he dissected the whole accusation, and answered each branch of it separately, and the concentric force of argument displayed in every part of his speech, masterly in the extreme; and, as we can readily understand, utterly routed, and overwhelmed his accusers.

It was very shortly after his return from Lisbon and his delivery of this speech (1816) that an opening was made for him in the Ministry, and he became President of the Board of Control, an office which he held till 1820, when he resigned once more, in consequence of circumstances connected with the trial of Queen Caroline. The whole episode

of Queen Caroline is narrated by Mr. Stapleton at considerable length. Canning's views on the subject were marked by rare good sense. He was, on the whole, of course, on the King's side. But he deprecated the divorce clause introduced by the Ministry into the Bill presented to Parliament, and drew up a masterly exposition of the evils to be apprehended from adopting it. During the progress of the Queen's trial, Mr. Canning, who had formerly been on terms of friendship with her Majesty, absented himself from England, and when it was over he made up his mind to retire from the Ministry. The King, who felt very deeply on the subject of Queen Caroline, was intensely mortified by Canning's conduct; and when, after her death in the following August, Lord Liverpool proposed Mr. Canning's return to the Cabinet, the King positively refused. "This opposition led Mr. Canning to turn his mind in another direction." This direction was India, of which he had acquired considerable knowledge during his situation at the Board of Control. Before the end of the year the Governor-Generalship was offered to him, and in the following summer accepted; the King, it is said, "jumping at the solution of difficulties which this appointment offered." But an event was at hand which made these arrangements nugatory, and altered, perhaps, the history of Europe. This was the suicide of Lord Castlereagh, and the succession of Mr. Canning to the Foreign Office in the October of 1822. Here then, again, after thirteen years, we find him restored to the post he had so long coveted, and considered to be his peculiar mission. He held the seals of this department about four years and a half, at the expiration of which time

he succeeded Lord Liverpool as Premier. This position, however, as our readers are aware, he occupied but for a few short months: dying after a stormy and trying Session, on the 8th of August, 1827, in the 57th year of his age.

Of Mr. Canning's uncomfortable relations with the aristocracy of his own party, many and various accounts have been given to the world. We have touched on this subject in an article upon the family of Grenville. Canning, it is evident, took up an independent line after Mr. Pitt's death, without being strong enough in property or connexions to support an independent line. He claimed to be the legitimate inheritor—the διαδοχος—of Pitt's policy, and a certain class of great personages grew tired of the name of Mr. Pitt. He made innumerable personal enemies by his unbridled sarcasm, and comparatively early in his career he alienated the most powerful section of his own party by abuse of Mr. Addington. When Pitt died, Canning found himself in much the same position as that of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley in the Marquis of Steyne's drawing-room, when she had to face the ladies by herself; and, though he struggled with his difficulties gallantly to the end of his days, he never thoroughly overcame them.

Canning was one of four great ministers in the present century whose death was irreparable. The others are Pitt, Fox, and Peel; and the consequence to their own connexion, and to the country, had they survived to the allotted threescore and ten, is a theme of inexhaustible speculation. But the speculation is a much more interesting one in the cases of Peel and Canning than in the two former. Pitt and Fox had, to some extent, their career chalked out for

them. Pitt could only have continued the war, and he could hardly have done so more successfully than Perceval and Liverpool. In 1815, however, he would only have been fifty-six; and it is possible that our relations with Foreign Powers might have been materially different at the present moment had he and Mr. Canning regulated our counsels at the peace. But these considerations are remote and barren compared with those which arise from the supposition that Mr. Canning's own life had been prolonged. The first probable consequence of such a change in the order of events that we can distinctly apprehend, is that Emancipation would have been carried without that disruption of the Tory party by which it was actually accomplished. Canning would most likely have carried it with the help of his new allies, with Peel and Wellington very probably voting against him. Had this happened, and the confidence of the old Tory party in their old Tory leaders never been undermined, the influence of the latter upon the Reform question would have been far other than it was. Mr. Canning, who would only have proved the sincerity of his character all the more by carrying Emancipation, to which he had always been devoted, would have been welcomed and implicitly trusted by the Tories in their battle with Reform, to which he had been consistently hostile. The result would probably have been a compromise, by which neither party would have profited at the expense of the other. Had the same statesman lived on into the reign of Queen Victoria, we have little doubt, from his known antecedents, that he would have conceded Free Trade, before it was extorted from him; and that he would have left the Tory party on

the intelligible footing of a party devoted to the maintenance of an aristocratic monarchy: determined to *govern* the country in the strict sense of the term; but seeing nothing incompatible with the security of our institutions in making the people who live under them comfortable, contented, and intelligent.

But to quit speculation, it may be interesting to revert to Mr. Canning's political ideas in general, and observe what kind of system it is that can be erected out of them. For this purpose we must go back to the early days of Mr. Pitt.

Persons are apt to suppose, nor do we deny that they are to some extent justified in doing so, that political or religious theories, promulgated through the medium of fiction, must necessarily be unsound. We have therefore sometimes thought that Mr. Disraeli was mistaken when he elected to give his theories to the world in the pages of a novel, in preference to a volume of essays—between which forms of publication, he tells us, he long hesitated. The consequence is, that he has hardly received the whole praise which he deserves for his admirable delineation of the earlier policy of Mr. Pitt. We have never entertained any doubt that his *résumé* of this period, in the pages of "Sybil," is substantially correct. Nor do we very well see how any impartial student can arrive at a different conclusion. George III., for the whole twenty years previous to Mr. Pitt's Administration, had been struggling with the Whig oligarchy, and hated them bitterly. When Pitt, at the age of twenty-four, first came into office as Lord Shelburne's Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was made to feel

the whole weight of their insolence and factiousness. And when he himself became the head of the King's Government less than nine months afterwards, the "Revolution Families" and their nominees were again his uncompromising antagonists in that life-and-death struggle which he terminated so triumphantly for himself. But it must have been clear to Mr. Pitt that, although a revulsion of popular feeling had enabled him to triumph for the present, he could never be secure against defeat while the power of his opponents was unbroken. The events of '83 and '84 had inspired him with an hostility towards the Whigs little less fierce than George III.'s. His sympathies and favourite studies brought him into contact with a different class in the community, and he was the first English minister who appreciated the importance of the great mercantile interest. Here, then, was his chance. A great commercial aristocracy, created by and devoted to himself, would be a certain bulwark against the machinations of the oligarchy, and at the same time a legitimate development of our social progress. His scheme of Parliamentary Reform on the one hand, and the extraordinary number of Peers whom he raised out of the manufacturing classes on the other, sufficiently attest his purpose. And this purpose, it is clear, from various indications, had been watched by young Canning with interest and approval. So far we think the policy of Mr. Pitt is obvious; and we quite concur with Mr. Disraeli's admiration of it. But now came the French Revolution, and that, as the author of "Coningsby" has observed with great truth, effected a complete change in Mr. Pitt. He was, says Mr. Disraeli,

obliged to throw himself into the arms of his enemies, a step which, had he understood the crisis better, he might easily have avoided, with advantage both to himself and his country. Now it is at this point that our divergence from Mr. Disraeli's theory commences. Changing our front, at all times a delicate operation, is doubly so in presence of the enemy. That reduction of the great families to a more equal position among the other governing forces of society, which was the object of Mr. Pitt, must be the work of quiet times. When a democratic anarchy threatened to overflow Europe, that was not the moment for social alterations in England. Pitt held his hand: and the same events which induced him to stop short in his original design, left him less to apprehend from those who had originally provoked him to adopt it. The language of the Whigs in relation to the affairs of France had rendered them thoroughly unpopular, while an influential section of the party, disgusted with Jacobinism, had passed over to the camp of the Tories. The further humiliation of the Families might be postponed till a later day. This was, probably, the state of mind in which Mr. Pitt died.

What, then, was the effect of his example and his own later experience on the mind of Mr. Canning? That he became at once more conservative and more liberal than his master. He had, evidently, arrived at the conclusion that, for many years to come, it would be unsafe to interfere with our institutions. But he saw, with no less clearness, that they must be liberally administered, in order to avert interference. Either to admit the people to a larger share in the government of the country, or to provoke them

into seizing it by neglect of their material interests, was, in his eyes, equally dangerous. These were, evidently, the fundamental principles of Mr. Canning's creed. They excuse his alliance with the Whigs, they inspired alike his foreign policy, his financial policy, his support of Roman Catholic Emancipation, and his resistance to Parliamentary Reform. Parliamentary Reform, he argued, was only required by the people for the sake of certain other reforms. Grant these, and Parliament might remain as it was. The demand for a change in the representation never rested in this country on enthusiasm for an abstract principle, on hatred of anomalies, or love of symmetry. Whatever the objections to which rotten boroughs are obnoxious, the people of England had got used to them, and, as a body, did not seek their abolition upon theoretical grounds. This undeniable fact was the pole-star of Canning's system. He saw that the people were still willing to be governed as distinct from the idea of governing. But he saw that very little was required to rouse a less manageable spirit. It became, therefore, his policy, while preserving our form of government intact, to liberalise our policy in every possible direction. Both Pitt and himself had begun their political career in an attitude of resistance to the nobility. But France had taken up the game in so dangerous a sense, that it had been necessary to desist from it in England. The state of the Continent was still too threatening: the political world generally was far too unsettled to permit of Canning taking up the scheme where Pitt had dropped it. Nor is it improbable that, reasoning from later events, Mr. Canning may have thought that there was no longer any

good reason for treading in Mr. Pitt's footsteps. It may therefore be, that it was owing to a prudent desire on his part to avoid habituating the public mind to a discussion of constitutional principles, that we find so little of them in his speeches on Parliamentary Reform. When serious, his speeches took usually an historical and legal turn. But he preferred to treat the subject humorously. For here he was more at ease and more effective. Thence it has been argued that Canning was not a profound thinker. Were we to argue this point, we should be only widening a mere verbal difference. If by profound is meant logical, consistent, and comprehensive—and nothing more very often *is* meant—then we say that Canning, perhaps, was the only practical statesman of his own day who deserved the title. If, however, it is meant that he had not probed the question of representation to the bottom, or reflected very deeply on the probable results of that enormous social progress of which he himself saw little more than the dawn, it is probably quite true. But it does not, in our opinion, detract one atom from his greatness. Even as late as 1827, it must be remembered, Parliamentary Reform was a mere speculation. The practical Whigs had abandoned it. There really seemed no call upon any statesman of the day to waste time in investigating the problem. Nor was this any slur upon their prescience. When Roman Catholic Emancipation, and a more liberal economic policy, were on the point of being carried, and the noisiest Whig leaders had tendered their support to a liberal Tory Government, Parliamentary Reform was really, and not only apparently, a subordinate question. A very mild

measure of reform would have satisfied the public then, and, probably, none at all. And the only practical mistake on the subject, with which Mr. Canning is chargeable, is, unfortunately, one over which he had no control: he died.

Canning was clearly a believer in that system of society, according to which a commonwealth should be composed of various orders of men, rising, as it were, tier above tier, with their proportionate allotments of power and privilege; the distinctions between them being based on the three qualifications of birth, property, and intelligence; and access to each tier being open to the one below it, if the applicant present a proper passport. But it is obvious, on the one hand, that this theory of a state presupposes a certain relative proportion between the layers of which it is composed; and on the other, that a society of this nature is only in its perfection after such proportion has been attained, and as long as it continues. How long that will be depends on a variety of circumstances. The oak remains in a state of stationary maturity much longer than the ash. But, society, unfortunately, does not grow like a tree, in which all the branches increase together, and, with all their irregularities and excrescences, maintain a due subordination. It grows, rather, like a town, in which wealth, population, and importance are always shifting their quarters, and ebbing now from the north towards the south, and now from the east towards the west. In this country, we see that political power has been gradually ebbing away from the aristocracy, and flowing freely towards the classes engaged in commerce. And it must, at the same

time, never be forgotten that aristocracy is not a growing institution. Aristocracy is territorial or nothing: and whereas the potentialities of trade are unlimited, no science has yet been discovered capable of making one acre into two. With the commercial democracy it is just the reverse. So that in all commercial States the time must arrive, sooner or later, when the latter body will no longer be contented with that place in the political scale which is necessary for the stability of a scheme at once complex and harmonious. It will burst its bounds, demand and obtain a preponderating influence in the State, and, by slow degrees, convert society from its graduated pyramidal shape into one uniform level. Men like Burke and Canning saw the excellence of our organisation so clearly, and felt it so strongly, that they could not bring themselves to admit the possibility, much less the necessity, of anything which should derange its equilibrium. They recognised the undoubted truth, that the constitution of this country had approached nearer to political perfection than any which the world had yet seen. They felt that we were already in the phase above described, when every class occupied just as much space in the social and political area as could safely and equitably be allotted to it; and they seem to have had no foreboding of that theory of numerical representation, which is one of the most formidable political phenomena of the present day. Canning, indeed, in one of his speeches on the subject, just alluded to it, as a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*, in answer to the reformers of his time; but he merely glances at it, and runs off to something else, as totally unaware of its real

nature and future importance. We say that, in this matter, Canning's own prescience was little, if at all, in fault: because, in his time, the ebb of aristocratic power was barely visible. The tide was only just upon the turn, if that; and had his life been spared, he might have almost indefinitely deferred the demand for the representation of numbers. But now the question has reached its present stage, the opponents of Reform may not justify their resistance by the example of Mr. Canning. All that it now becomes the truest Conservative to strive for is, that the degrees by which English society is to be changed may be as gradual, and that its form may be retained as long, as possible. To effect this end, popular demands should be met with cheerfulness and frankness, and with as much of concession as may be. Every effort should be made to anticipate agitation; to keep our house in order; and not to leave a single tub lying about to serve as a pulpit for the demagogue. In a word, the governing classes must take the people by the hand; let them see that they are in earnest to grant them every reasonable request; and all may yet be well for centuries, and Canning sleep peacefully in his grave.

Of Canning's Foreign Policy, less, perhaps, requires to be said. He took a middle course between the High-Tory theory of his own times, and the popular theory of the present day. In opposition to those who made the maintenance of monarchical government the basis of our foreign alliances, Mr. Canning took his stand on the maintenance of the balance of power. His doctrine was, that with the relations between rulers and their subjects Great Britain was in no way concerned; but that in the relations between one con-

tinental State and another, she was deeply and immediately interested. It was nothing to her that Spain chose to have a constitution. It was everything that the French interfered to prevent it. Had they interfered, however, on the other side, we have no reason to doubt that Canning would have felt equally bound to protest against their conduct. The one thing which he was determined not to tolerate was the invasion of one country by the troops of another country to assist one of two parties in an internal dispute. When the French invaded Spain in 1823, at the request of the Spanish Government, Canning at once retaliated, by acknowledging the independence of the Spanish colonies in America. If France was to have Spain, or what was just as good, she should not have "the Indies" as well. That was the key to his policy. Again, when Spain invaded Portugal under similar circumstances, Canning at once despatched an English force to the Tagus. Thus it will be seen that his idea of "non-intervention" was not of that absolute character which is in vogue at the present day. Intervention, such as the intervention of Russia in Hungary, or of Austria in Naples, was abhorrent to his views of English interests, as well as to his theory of government. But intervention of another kind to prevent intervention of *that* kind, or to save a smaller State from being swallowed up by a larger, he appears to have thought a duty. To maintain a neutrality in the quarrels between rulers and subjects, it might be necessary sometimes to violate neutrality in the quarrels between rival States. It is evident, therefore, that Canning had no idea of our standing quite aloof from continental affairs. He had not arrived at the

conclusion that we could safely or profitably cut ourselves adrift from the European system. With forms of government he condemned any interference. With the removal of landmarks he thought interference indispensable. From the principles of the Holy Alliance he utterly dissented. But of the doctrine of the balance of power he was a steadfast champion. Nor had he brought himself to see how it could be neglected without the most serious danger to the future independence of this country.

In his selections from the foreign correspondence of Mr. Canning, Mr. Stapleton has shown excellent judgment. It is difficult to understand how, on comparing these letters with the ordinary run of such documents, the reader could hesitate to admit Mr. Canning's claim to true originality of mind and the loftiest political genius. Here is a specimen:

> Now, as to our influence upon the Continent, if such a war as we sustained for (with a single intermission) a quarter of a century, in behalf of all Europe, and by turns *against* all Europe in its own behalf, has not taught all Europe where they are to look for protection against overgrown and overbearing power, I am sure no part that we could take in a Congress, upon an insurrection of Carbonari at Naples, or of Freemasons at Madrid, would acquire for us the confidence which such a war had failed to command. Let the occasion come, and Prince Metternich shall see! But it is not by perpetually creating occasions; it is not by incessant meddling with petty interests and domestic squabbles in other countries, that the influence of Great Britain is to be maintained. On the contrary, it is more likely to be frittered away by such restless exertion: and to be found exhausted, or disabled from acting, when real occasion may arise. Besides, what *is* the influence which we have had in the counsels of the Alliance, and which Prince Metternich exhorts us to be so careful not to throw away? We protested at Laybach; we remonstrated at Verona. Our protest was treated as waste paper; our remonstrances mingled with the air.

Pretty influence! and much worth preserving? No—our influence, if it is to be maintained abroad, must be secure in the sources of our strength at home: and the sources of that strength are in the sympathy between the people and the Government; in the union of the public sentiment with the public counsels; in the reciprocal confidence and co-operation of the House of Commons and the Crown. If Prince Metternich has taught himself to believe that the House of Commons is merely a clog and impediment to the free action of the counsellors of the Crown; that its prejudices are to be softened, its waywardness to be soothed, but that the tenour of the Government is in effect independent of its impulse—that it is, in short, to be managed, but not to be consulted—he is mistaken. It is as essential a part of the national council as it is of the national authority; and woe be to the minister who should undertake to conduct the affairs of this country upon the principle of settling the course of its foreign policy with a Grand Alliance, and should rely upon carrying *their* decisions into effect by throwing a little dust in the eyes of the House of Commons. And yet this does appear to be what Prince Metternich considers as a possible course of conduct.

We wish we had space to multiply such extracts, but our thread is well-nigh spun.

Of Canning as an orator conflicting traditions have come down to us. We do not pretend to decide between them. We extract from Mr. Stapleton the opinion of one eminent man on this point, and we shall give another out of "Hansard:"

"But his (Mr. Canning's) declamation, though often powerful, always beautifully ornate, never deficient in admirable diction, was certainly not of the very highest class. It wanted depth; it came from the mouth, not from the heart; and it tickled or even filled the ear rather than penetrated the bosom of the listener. The orator never seemed to forget himself, and to be absorbed by his theme; he was not carried away by his passions, and he carried not his audience along with him. An actor stood before us—a first-rate one, no doubt—but still an actor, and we never forgot that it was a representation we were witnessing, not a real scene. The Grecian artist was of the second class only, at

whose fruit the *birds* pecked; while, on seeing Parrhasius's, *men* cried out to draw aside the curtain. Mr. Canning's declamation entertained his hearers, so artistically was it executed; but only an inexperienced critic could mistake it for the highest reach of the oratorical art. The truly great orator is he who carries away his hearer, or fixes his whole attention on the subject—with the subject fills his whole soul; than the subject will suffer him to think of no other thing—of the subject's existence alone will let him be conscious, while the vehement inspiration lasts on his own mind, which he communicates to his hearer; and will only suffer him to reflect on the admirable execution of what he has heard, after the burst is over, the whirlwind passed away, and the excited feelings have, in the succeeding lull, sunk into repose."

"I never saw Mr. Canning but once, when I had no expectation of ever being a member of this House. But I can recollect it but as yesterday, when I listened to almost the last accents (I may say the dying words) of that great man. I can recal the lightning flash of that eye, and the tumult of that ethereal brow; still lingers in my ear the melody of that voice. But, sir, when shall we see another Mr. Canning?—a man who ruled this House as Alexander ruled Bucephalus, of whom it was said that the horse and the rider were equally proud."

Which is the more correct of these descriptions let those who have heard Mr. Canning say. One is from the pen of Lord Brougham, the other from the lips of Mr. Disraeli.

Neither, however, do justice either to Canning's humour or to the luminous arrangement which, more than any other merit, was the characteristic of his oratory. As specimens of the latter, we should mention his speech on the Lisbon Embassy and his speech on the Corn Laws, March 1, 1827. Specimens of the former are to be found in his speeches, *passim*. But we cannot refrain from quoting the celebrated "red-lion" passage from a speech on Reform at Liverpool:

But Parliamentary Reform is the panacea for every evil. I read a few days ago (I cannot immediately recollect where) a story of an artist who had attained great eminence in painting, but who had directed

his art chiefly to one favourite object; that object happened to be a *red lion*. His first employment was at a public-house, where the landlord allowed him to follow his fancy. Of course the artist recommended a *red lion*. A gentleman in the neighbourhood, having a new dining-room to ornament, applied to the artist for his assistance; and in order that he might have full scope for his talents, left to him the choice of a subject for the principal compartment of the room. The painter took due time to deliberate; and then, with the utmost gravity and earnestness, "Don't you think," said he to his employer, "that a handsome *red lion* would have a fine effect in this situation?" The gentleman was not entirely convinced, perhaps; however, he let the painter have his way in this instance, determined, nevertheless, that in his library, to which he next conducted him, he would have something of more exquisite device and ornament. He showed him a small panel over his chimney-piece. "Here," says he, "I must have something striking. The space, you see, is but small; the workmanship must be proportionably delicate." "What think you," says the painter, after appearing to dive deep into his imagination for the suggestion, "of a *small red lion?*" Just so it is with Parliamentary Reform; and the utmost variety that you can extort from those who call themselves "Moderate Reformers" is, that they will be contented with a *small red lion!*

Our conviction is, that Canning was one of the greatest political minds that England has produced. If consistency and fidelity be proofs of honesty, he was inflexibly honest. He saw things from a considerable distance. He was above all petty motives of self-advancement. He held by a great and glorious political system, and believed that government meant something more than merely registering the caprices of the multitude. He was born to lead and to rule, and the last of that fine old race of English statesmen who have stamped their name and character on particular epochs of our history. He was a liberal aristocrat, and the fitting minister of that free monarchy whose splendour he loved, and whose prerogative he defended to the last.

SIR ROBERT PEEL, 1862.*

THIS is a more interesting volume than we should have thought it was possible to write about the late Sir Robert Peel. His character and conduct have been so thoroughly and so frequently dissected as to have left no fact of importance unrevealed. He has been dead so long that the personal interest which attaches to distinguished men has almost faded from his name, while he has not been dead long enough to be the subject of legitimate history. But Sir Lawrence has given us a narrative at once so fresh and so forcible, so just and yet so lively and spirited, that we feel all our curiosity renewed, and all our former opinions sharpened, straightened, and reset. He has prefaced to his work some notices of the Peel family, illustrating the character of their celebrated descendant, from which we learn that he was of yeoman descent, and unconnected with the Lancashire people of that name, who belonged to the landed

* The Life and Character of Sir Robert Peel. By Sir Lawrence Peel. London: Longmans.

gentry. These earlier pages of his work are interspersed with some interesting anecdotes of the statesman's grandfather, and graphic sketches of the dress and manners which prevailed among the old manufacturing society in the eighteenth century. Nothing can be more laudable than the genial and unaffected sympathy with his humbler ancestors which Sir Lawrence manifests in every line. We must, however, pass over this portion of his work, with a strong recommendation of it to our readers, in order to glance at the conclusions arrived at by the biographer upon Sir Robert's political career.

Sir Lawrence Peel confesses that he himself took but little interest in politics. But his remarks have a value of their own, derived from his intimate knowledge of Peel's character, his early habits, and hereditary propensities. He interprets the politician by the man, and not the man by the politician. Thus Sir Robert's anti-Catholic convictions were not so much the offspring of Lord Liverpool's influence as a cherished family tradition. His apparent coldness and formality did not arise from any suspicion of aristocratic exclusiveness or distrust of his own associates, but from the fact that he had always been held up to his brothers as "the good boy." The consciousness of being an example invested him with a precocious gravity which he retained through life, and explains the somewhat prevalent opinion that he was deficient in warmth of heart. The key to his political principles is to be looked for in his father's warehouse. Peel was born a Tory. But his Toryism was the commercial Toryism of Pitt—"the Toryism of the counting-house, the factory, the mart, and the city, rather

than the Toryism of the manor-house or the cloister." Hence the mistake of M. Guizot, who imagines that Sir Robert as a young man evinced an inclination towards Whiggism, which a popular delusion has always confused with liberality.

Nothing can be clearer to us than Sir Robert's political pedigree. Though commonly considered the political opponent of Mr. Canning, we have never doubted that he naturally belonged to the same school of Tory statesmen. We are happy to find that Sir Lawrence Peel confirms this view: quoting a letter of Sir Robert's, in which he regrets being severed from a colleague "with whom he had cordially acted;" and a speech of Mr. Canning, in which he states that there was between Sir Robert and himself "as great a community of sentiment as could well exist among public men." They differed only upon the subject of Roman Catholic Emancipation. And Sir Robert's views on this point were, as we have seen, a matter more of feeling than of principle. With this single exception, we see in Sir Robert Peel the statesman marked out as the successor of Mr. Canning, who was in turn marked out for the successor of Mr. Pitt. But Canning took up the liberal commercial policy of Mr. Pitt when the return of peace made it possible, and Peel in turn took up the policy of Mr. Canning. But the important political events which intervened between the death of this statesman and the accession of the Conservatives to power in 1841, had so altered the situation of parties, that Sir Robert was in a false position. The Reform Bill, in the first instance, followed up by the ecclesiastical policy and financial misma-

nagement of the Whigs, had created a general alarm throughout the country, only less violent than the panic of the French Revolution. Nothing else can account for the extraordinary reaction of public feeling against the Whigs. But the consequence was that the old Tory party was re-organised by Sir Robert Peel upon the basis of resistance, and was christened anew by a title which betrayed its origin, the title of Conservative.

The construction of the party on this basis was an imperative necessity at the time, and was a great benefit to the community. But it was a real misfortune for Sir Robert. It was by the help of the landed interest that he had stemmed the progress of the Whigs. It was the landed interest which had saved the Church from spoliation and the Exchequer from bankruptcy. Was not an injury inflicted upon that interest very like undoing his own work and undermining the supports upon which his own principles reposed? The repeal of the Corn Laws was an undoubted injury to that party; but less, far less, by the temporary loss which it inflicted, than by the breach of confidence which the method of doing it involved. We must confess that we have no sympathy whatever with the following sentiments expressed in a letter to Lord Aberdeen:

> If I had tried to gain acquiescence, either by belabouring individuals, or by summoning the party generally, I should have received scarcely one promise of support. I should have had, on the part of the most moderate, a formal protest against the course I intended to pursue; to the most violent I should have given facilities for organised opposition. I should have appeared to be flying in the face of a whole party, and contumaciously disregarding their opinion and advice

after I had professed to consult them, but (what is of infinitely more importance), I should have failed in carrying the repeal of the Corn Laws. Now, I was resolved not to fail; and if I had to fight the battle over again, I would fight it in the same way.

English parties are not to be managed by "dodges" of this nature. But Sir Robert, we repeat, had placed himself in a false position. The successor of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning, he was nevertheless pledged to a policy of resistance. He discovered his error too late, which it was always his misfortune to do. He was for ever running after public opinion, and breaking his shins in trying to spring up behind it. But in this case at all events he ought to have acquiesced in his position, and resigned the passage of the Corn Laws into other and more suitable hands. "A good Government," said the Duke of Wellington, "is of more importance than corn laws." And the interests of the Constitution imperatively demanded that the Conservative party should be kept together. But the spectacle of the very Minister who had formed it on the express basis of resistance, who had given it its new name in indication of its future duties, giving way on this important question, and deceiving his supporters into the bargain, at once dissolved it into air. We have no hesitation in saying that it struck a heavier blow at the system of party government than anything which has been done since the Revolution. And in the impossibility of forming a strong government, which has prevailed ever since its occurrence, we experience its inevitable results. Before the Tory party acquired the title of Conservative, its essential distinction resided in its theory of government. No doubt that truth had been partially overlooked during the last

days of the Georges. But it showed itself plainly as late as 1812, and the Tories could have always fallen back upon that if taunted with the character of their measures. This primary article of their faith was the independence of the Crown. "Sir," said the elder Pitt to George III., "your Government cannot be carried on without the great families who have supported the Revolution Government." "Well, Mr. Pitt," replied the King, "this won't do." The great fact that "this wouldn't do" was the foundation of the new Tory party which, under the auspices of Chatham's son, raised England to the pinnacle of greatness. There was nothing in its origin which specially connected it with any kind of home or foreign policy. But as soon as it exchanged its ancient function of guarding the independence of the Sovereign for the modern one of protecting the institutions of the country, its field of action became narrower. This fact Sir Robert Peel does not seem to have realized. He intended Conservatism to be an elastic variety of Toryism. He did not see that it was, in fact, Toryism without its elasticity. When he tried its powers of expansion, it burst in his hands. The time, indeed, has gone by in this country for the union of those opposite elements which constituted the Toryism of Pitt. The struggle now lies between the friends and enemies of the English Constitution in its broadest sense. We may think ourselves lucky if we can preserve that by the aid of either great families or small. But that was the mistake which Sir Robert Peel made. He failed to see that he could not take the same liberties with Conservatism as Pitt could take with Toryism.

And the result was that he sowed the elements of dissension in the only party capable of saving us from democratic aggressions.

Sir Lawrence Peel discusses at some length the question of Sir Robert's originality. He objects to what Sir Archibald Alison calls the "felicitous expression" of Mr. Disraeli—namely, that Sir Robert's mind was a "huge impropriation clause." He objects equally to Sir Archibald's own assertion, that he produced no *idée mère*. Not that he denies the truth of it, but he says: "In the nineteenth century, when a parallel passage may be found for almost every fine or true thought, an *idée mère*, in the sense of a native, underived, unprecedented thought, raises a presumption against itself, that it is one of the vapours of the mind, an impregnation by the winds, a fume of vanity." This is, perhaps, the only really foolish saying in the whole volume. Such ideas are the salt of society. The varying combination of circumstances in all ages of the world evoke them. But at the same time they are not absolutely essential to the character of a great minister. Walpole had none—unless the very grandeur of his corruption be entitled to that dignity. Burke was prolific of such ideas. Pitt and Fox much less so. Mr. Canning less so perhaps than is commonly supposed. Mr. Disraeli's name is associated with several such mental products; Mr. Gladstone, again, with hardly any. They are no necessary touchstone of political genius. They attest a warm imagination and an energetic pursuit of first principles; but they sometimes interfere with the practical

utility of statesmen, as was instanced in the case of Burke; while the absence of them is no impediment to a prosperous and powerful administration. Still, be these ideas worth what they may to the practical statesman, it is undeniable that Sir Robert was without them. He was essentially a safe man. And a safe man with just enough native power to secure the subordination of his party, and with sufficient political experience to justify the confidence of the middle classes, is exactly the man for a party-leader in the English House of Commons; and we certainly consider Sir Robert Peel to have been a successful party-leader, notwithstanding his final catastrophe. For sixteen years, at least, he was the unquestioned leader of the Tory-Conservative party. He had rallied them from a state of depression and unpopularity, to which the condition of the same party in 1849 is the only parallel. In ten years' time he had completely pulled down again the Whig ascendancy established in 1832; and but for the one fatal error he committed might have been what the Emperor Nicholas declared that he would be, "the Walpole of the nineteenth century." Not but what there is some truth in Sir Lawrence Peel's own remark, that the Conservative party of 1841, powerful as it really was, bore within itself "the germs of dissolution." It was as we have already pointed out, to some extent built upon a mistake. The bulk of the party believed themselves engaged upon a steady resistance to all further concessions. The leader, perhaps the leaders, had resolved upon a policy of progress. Yet it was within the resources of a truly great man to

have avoided the consequences of this misunderstanding. He might slowly and gradually have inoculated his party with his own views. The Irish famine need not have precipitated Free Trade. In a few years the discovery of the gold-fields would have made the change an easy one, and Sir Robert might still have been the donor of the cheap loaf, yet have died the trusted leader of a powerful and united party. But to this Sir Robert Peel was unequal. The fatal consciousness that deep in the recesses of his own mind lay the germ of opinions adverse to the creed of his followers, impaired both the clearness of his judgment and the strength of his will. It led him to drift along towards his destiny, and to abandon his post at the first prospect of a collision. But for this, we say, he might have exceeded the reputation of any English minister either before or subsequent to Pitt. More virtuous than Walpole, and more able than Liverpool, he would have rivalled them in the length of his administration, and have surpassed them in the odour of his memory. *Dis aliter visum.* But he played no ordinary part among the political chieftains of England, and was, as Mr. Disraeli justly described him, perhaps, "the greatest Member of Parliament" which the Commons of England ever knew. That he was not, as has been erroneously supposed, the founder of a school, is amply proved by the position of those statesmen who were once called after his name. The Peelites have already shown, beyond all dispute, that they had no bond of cohesion, except personal regard for the late Minister. He left no doctrine behind him which could

inspire any future party. The measures by which he is best known were only partially original; and on that very account, perhaps, his individual influence may be considered the more remarkable. But he was a great man. And, as was said of another great man, though eminently unlike himself—"Mortuus est, et sepultus est, et descendit ad inferos—let us say no more upon the subject."

MR. GLADSTONE, AUGUST, 1859.

HISTORICAL situations, we are told, never reproduce themselves. Of political situations the same thing may probably be said. Each successive epoch will have certain distinctive features, compelling us to pass a separate and independent judgment on the actors concerned it. No two parliamentary coalitions will be essentially alike, and no two political converts but will require to be contemplated from different points of view. Such being the case, we shall confine ourselves, in the present article, almost wholly to contemporary circumstances: nor attempt either to condemn or to justify the recent conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer by examples drawn from former conjunctures. His behaviour during the last few years must speak for itself; and if it be impossible to show that, for having lost the confidence of one great party in the State without gaining the confidence of the other, and having thus reduced the utility of his great talents and virtues to the lowest possible ebb, he has any one to blame but himself, it shall not be for want of an impartial statement of facts, and a fair construction of motives, upon our part.

It is a remarkable feature in Mr. Gladstone that he occupies so commanding a position in the House of Commons that every new Cabinet feels bound to make overtures to him, and yet feels nearly as well pleased if he refuse as if he accept them. To avert his hostility rather than to secure his friendship seems to be the object of all. He is a shade more formidable on the Opposition benches than in the Cabinet. But that is just all that can be said. Already he has been in office but a month, and his peculiarities have been amply displayed. He has voted against his colleagues on two measures of first-class importance and significance. We mean the Grammar-school Bill of Mr. Dilwhyn, and the Bill for the Abolition of Church-rates. *They* may be willing enough to secure his adhesion on terms such as these; but is it an equally satisfactory symptom of public virtue that a man such as Mr. Gladstone was hoped to be can be found so to give it? Is there anything in the present condition of public affairs which makes it absolutely necessary for a statesman of Mr. Gladstone's character to occupy so ambiguous and ineffective a position? Does he care for the maintenance of Church-rates, or the sanctity of our educational endowments? There can be but one answer to this question.* Is he then positively obliged, does the public welfare so imperatively demand him, to take office with men who refuse to respect either? Was this really the last chance of saving something out of the fire? And are we to look on Mr. Glad-

* Since these lines were written, Mr. Gladstone's conduct would scarcely warrant this confident assertion.

stone as a species of martyr who has determined to brave the bad opinion of the world, to endure to see his motives misinterpreted, and his friends fall away from him, if so be he might rescue but one vessel of the temple? Such a man, indeed, would deserve our enthusiastic admiration, and the voice of posterity would give him his deserts. But is Mr. Gladstone such a man? Is the state of parties such as to afford us any rational ground for believing that a man of Mr. Gladstone's experience did really reason in this way?

Far be it from us to underrate the perplexities with which the career of Conservative statesmen is surrounded at the present moment. In order to carry on Government with success, the popular ear must be gained. To gain the popular ear, an alliance with that narrow and intolerant creed, which, with singular infelicity, is denominated Liberalism, is a *sine quâ non*. And the problem which every statesman has to solve is this: Shall I abide where I am, endeavouring to stimulate the lukewarm, to reclaim the wavering; to inspire confidence through the entire body, and wait in hope that the eyes of the nation will shortly be opened to the necessity of arresting our march towards the final elevation of ignorance over intelligence, and numbers over property? Or, believing that this is impossible, shall I feign to read a recantation, gain admission into the enemy's ranks, and endeavour, as far as in me lies, to counteract his dangerous propensities? Honest and high-minded men might, we fully believe, adopt either of these alternatives. And there is, it must be confessed, a desperately strong temptation to adopt the latter. It seems

hopeless, for the present at least, that those who have made the choice necessary, should agree to disentangle the embarrassment. The real believers, indeed, in any political creed adverse to that of Lord Derby, are but a small minority of the House of Commons. Nobody will persuade any sensible man that the owner of ten thousand acres, the patron of a dozen livings, the dictator of three or four boroughs, can have any real sympathy with Mr. Bright or Mr. Dilwhyn. Human nature protests against any so monstrous an assumption. But at the present moment, it suits the purposes of the aristocrat to affect this sympathy, and constitutional politicians are consequently reduced to the dilemma aforesaid.

A man needs almost as much courage to be an avowed Conservative at the present day, as he did forty years ago to be an avowed Radical. All the most open and conspicuous channels of public opinion are against him. The utmost he can hope for, if he does his work well, is to escape abuse. A single slip brings down upon his head the wrath of twenty editors. With characteristic apathy the Conservative party have quite allowed the power of the press to slip through their fingers. Men of undoubted Conservative sympathies will not write in favour of a Conservative Government. The consequence is, that the leading Whig, Radical, and Peelite organs have it all their own way. A vast number of good, easy-going people, are prepared to believe whatever their newspaper tells them. A vast majority of them know no newspaper but *The Times*. *The Times*—and we do not blame it—is simply the greatest party-paper of the day, as Pericles was called "the greatest of the demagogues." Its

partisanship is conducted on so grand a scale that we hardly know it for partisanship. But partisanship it is, of the most steady, pertinacious, and elaborately-organised character. The faint praise with which Conservatives are damned, and the faint damnation with which Whigs are saved; the artful assumption, never under any circumstances lost sight of, that blundering is the rule with the one party, and the exception with the other; that Conservative well-doing is, as it were, the lucid moment of a lunatic, and Whig wrong-doing the temporary aberration of a sane man; that the one may be admired and applauded for a happy accident of legislation, but never seriously trusted; and that the others, though liable, like all men, to error, must always be our ultimate resource on occasions of serious business—these ideas, we say, sometimes covertly, sometimes openly, but always unmistakably propagated through the columns of *The Times*, have created a public opinion throughout the country; a preoccupation of mind, a prepossession, rather than a prejudice, which, on account of its very softness and superficiality, it is difficult and discouraging to encounter. With a man whose opinions have been formed in this way you cannot reason. His mind is like dough. If you push him down in one place, he swells out again in another. Or perhaps a better illustration is to liken him to a ghost who separates and lets you go through him, to re-unite again when the process is over. If we can imagine such a thing possible as that a man should be perpetually meeting people who believed that he was dead, and refused even when they saw him to believe that he was alive, we shall have some idea of the discomfort experienced in many circles by the

man who calls himself a Conservative. That his day will come round again we have no doubt whatever. We are merely speaking of the position in which he finds himself at this particular moment. Hence, then, one very intelligible reason why men should be strongly tempted to adopt the latter of two alternatives we have above sketched out, and prefer to conceal their Conservatism behind a liberal mask to wearing it openly before the world. Whether it is a reason which ought to weigh with Mr. Gladstone, our readers may determine for themselves.

In the second place, there is something, we confess, that smacks of weakness in the very sound of a Conservative *opposition.* A Tory opposition we can understand, because Toryism relates to certain first principles of government, which must always continue *sub judice.* But institutions once given up cannot be recalled. So that the longer a Conservative party remains in opposition, the less, if its opponents are honest, will be the necessity for Conservatives. As institution after institution goes down, such an opposition will have less and less work to do, till at last it will have none at all. And here, of course, it is placed at a great disadvantage in comparison with a Radical opposition. A concession, however long withheld, may still be granted at last. But a reform actually carried, can never hereafter be annulled. The longer a Conservative Government remains in power, the more will a sincerely Radical Government have to accomplish. The longer a Radical Government remains in power, the less will a Conservative Government have to conserve. So that the one on acceding to office finds itself at once in a position to give effect to its essential doctrines; the other,

perhaps, finds all on which its essential doctrines were based already destroyed. It is obvious that the different prospects which thus await the two parties must have a powerful effect upon their conduct and demeanour in opposition; and must hold out a standing inducement to deserters. Here, then, is another most practical reason why it behoves us to judge the conduct of all statesmen at a crisis like the present with singular forbearance and charity. There *are* strong temptations to a statesman in Mr. Gladstone's position to act as he has done. Yet if he choose to say they were too strong for him, it is, we are sure, what none of his friends would like to hear him say, or like to hear said of him.

It may be urged, we are aware, that a life of inactivity is not to Mr. Gladstone's taste; and it may be asked, of course, why is the country to lose the benefit of his services, or he the solid advantages of office, because of a speculative difference of opinion with Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell or Mr. Gibson. We do not think very much need be said in reply to this mode of argument. Of course, men must judge for themselves when their principles are likely to be endangered by any particular course of action, and when they are not. The public will not always judge as charitably of converts as they may perhaps deserve. But that is only one kind of penance for their previous attachment to error. This is a question which Mr. Gladstone must settle for himself. If he thinks he has acted for the best interests of the principles he believes to be true, he is an honest man. But that does not prove that his example is one that should be followed, or that he may not have

done more injury to the cause he loves by the means he has chosen to promote it, than he can do good by his own individual exertions. He may serve Conservatism at the time by advising the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston, but he may deeply injure the only party in the State which is the permanent support of Conservative principles at *all* times. If, on the other hand, he has ceased to be a Conservative, why, he is an honest man, too, after a fashion. But he is certainly not a candid one; and in that case his academical constituency will have undergone the process familiarly known as being "sold." However, we do not affect for a moment to believe in this latter hypothesis. We believe Mr. Gladstone is still a Conservative.* We are under the impression that he was a good deal taken by surprise at Lord Derby's defeat, and had, perhaps, contemplated taking office under him at no distant period: and that his subsequent acceptance of the Exchequer under Lord Palmerston was merely one of those ill-considered and unpractical vicissitudes to which Mr. Gladstone's moral nature seems peculiarly prone. But it certainly evinces a great misconception of his relations with the Conservative party, and involves a wide deviation from the only principles of government which are worthy of his genius. We can imagine Mr. Gladstone a Tory, and we can imagine him a Radical. We can fancy him a Papist, a Baptist, or a Unitarian. But the Evangelical oligarchy—the grey-headed placemen who are justified by faith—the Woburn-

* The reader will of course bear in mind that this essay was written in the summer of 1859. But *even now*, it would seem, after all that he has said and done since that, he still wishes to be a Conservative.

Abbey interest which abolishes Church-rates! this is certainly the last quarter in the world in which we should have expected to find the member for the University of Oxford. All the attributes which Mr. Gladstone has been occupied all his life in hating are here met together, and here is Mr. Gladstone in the midst of them.

We say it with unfeigned regret—but there is no excuse for this conduct, such as any but the right honourable gentleman's most intimate friends could accept. They may account for it by his well-known mental peculiarities. But the public at large cannot. They will only see that he stood aloof from Lord Derby's Government in its first formation, when his accession would have been of priceless value; and, finally, gave a silent vote in its favour to please his constituency, when a silent vote was worthless. They will see that this was a Government heartily desirous of supporting Mr. Gladstone's views, and that it very. much rested with Mr. Gladstone himself, whether they should be strong enough to do so; that he declined to bring about this result, and shuffled off the opportunity afforded him of reuniting the Conservative party; and preferred, for some unexplained reason, to cast in his lot with a Premier with whom he has not one principle in common. We are entitled to ask of public men their reasons for such conduct as this. What was Mr. Gladstone's reason? Is it a public one? then he should have boldly declared it. Is it a private one? then it must be, *ex vi termini*, insufficient.

The Conservative party has a right to feel deeply wounded at the stigma thrown upon them by Mr. Gladstone's extraordinary behaviour. After making such

advances towards a union that the public at large were in daily expectation of his joining the Cabinet; after having accepted the mission to the Ionian Islands; after having defended the most characteristic element of their Reform Bill; and, after having declared by his last vote of all that he considered them entitled to the confidence of the country, he turns round immediately afterwards and joins a set of men whose conduct, if Lord Derby *did* merit the confidence of the country, is simply infamous; and who are only to be vindicated from the grossest and most reckless selfishness on the supposition that Mr. Gladstone was totally in the wrong, both in his support of the Reform Bill and his opposition to the vote of censure! And these men Mr. Gladstone joined, notwithstanding that he had for a year and a half declined to take office with Lord Derby. It was not, therefore, mere unwillingness to undertake the responsibilities of official life which prevented his adhesion to that nobleman; it was not, as we have shown, the policy of the Conservatives on Parliamentary Reform; it could not be their policy on Church-rates; it could not be their ecclesiastical opinions; for on both of these subjects the Conservatives and Mr. Gladstone are much more at one than the latter gentleman and his new associates. It could scarcely be their foreign policy. For if that by itself was sufficient to outweigh all the other advantages which would have been secured by his adhesion: if that by itself was so monstrous, so odious, so intolerable; Mr. Gladstone, we are sure, could never have voted for the retention of Lord Malmesbury in office. On financial questions Mr. Gladstone has shown himself, ere now, willing to concur with Mr.

Disraeli, and it is generally understood that the Budget prepared by the late Government would have differed in no essential respect from the present Chancellor's. There was, therefore, not one single public question on which any adequate difference of opinion existed between the two parties; and indeed, had any such existed, Mr. Gladstone has subsequently shown us that they need have formed no obstacle in his way; while on a majority of great public questions they were, to all practical purposes, united. Yet, though he had pertinaciously refused to join a Cabinet which regulated its policy on principles so congenial to himself, no sooner is an offer made to him by it's successful antagonists, whose conduct he had twice condemned as factious and unprincipled, than he accepts it without hesitation. Surely, people will say, a politician so hungry for office that he takes it even from such men as these, must have had some singularly stringent motive for declining to take it from Lord Derby. That Mr. Gladstone is Chancellor of the Exchequer in the present Administration proves, to say the least of it, that he is ready to make no inconsiderable sacrifices for the sake of holding office. What was the sacrifice he was called upon to make as a condition of taking office under the late Government, which seemed to him so much more considerable? What was the sacrifice demanded of him by a Conservative Government which was not demanded by a Liberal Government? We have travelled over the field of public questions; we have exhausted every topic of legislation on which a difference of opinion could arise; and we find that, so far as all these are concerned, Mr. Gladstone could have joined the late Go-

vernment without any sacrifice at all. It is just and necessary, therefore, that the public should know what his reason was. Common fairness towards those whose company he shunned so unaccountably demands an explanation. When a man avoids his natural associates for no assignable cause, there is good ground for suspecting that one or other of the two has reason to blush at the estrangement. Now we unhesitatingly assert that this party is not the Conservatives, or, at all events, we challenge Mr. Gladstone to prove it. It is cowardly in him to leave them under such imputations as he has done. He relies on his own high character to shield himself from injurious aspersions, and cares not, seemingly, what people may think of those whom he has so suddenly deserted. What have they done? Speak out, Mr. Gladstone, like an Englishman, and let us know. For if they have done nothing, and you continue to agree with their principles, it is of still greater importance you should be found by their side now than even when they were in office.

And here we must notice two statements that have been put forward, the one in defence of Mr. Gladstone for not joining Lord Derby, the other justifying him for making an alliance with Lord Palmerston. Both, however, are so unworthy either of a patriotic statesman, or an intellectual being, that we shall dismiss them very briefly. It is said, in the first place, that the sacrifice demanded of Mr. Gladstone before he could become one of Lord Derby's Government, was nothing less than the sacrifice of his antipathy to Mr. Disraeli. Now, mind, we believe that antipathy, always very much exaggerated, had within the last six months

totally disappeared; but even had it not, will any man, with the slightest appreciation of the gravity and dignity of statesmanship, pretend, for one moment, to accept this reason as sufficient? For let us consider all that Mr. Gladstone's obstinate isolation meant. It meant, in fact, nothing less than the indefinite prolongation of that parliamentary anarchy which has existed since 1846. It may seem a bold assertion, but we say it with confidence, that if, at the first formation of Lord Derby's Government, Mr. Gladstone had come forward frankly and lent the whole moral weight of his character (now, alas! how much impaired), and the force of his matchless eloquence to the new Administration, Lord Derby would have been in office at this moment, at the head of the most powerful and compact Government since the days of Sir Robert Peel. The clergy would have been zealous at the elections; and enough at least would have been done to *turn the scale*. A Government so constituted would have gone on gathering strength, and gradually absorbing into its ranks all the younger talent of the House. It would have then been in a position to settle the Church-rate question without settling the Church. To send Mr. Dilwhyn to the right-about. To preserve our smaller constituencies, and independent minor interests from being swamped. And, generally, to carry out all those principles which constitute Mr. Gladstone's creed. The country was more favourably inclined to the idea of a Conservative Administration than it had been for years; and as strength begets respect, much of the satire which has been levelled at Conservative opinions would have been silenced, and all the more timid

class of partisans would have ventured to declare themselves. Mr. Gladstone is a Conservative; all this it was in his power to accomplish for Conservatism; are we to believe, then, for one instant, that any personal feeling towards an individual could have been weighed in his mind with the consummation of such glorious results, and been allowed to prevail against it? He must be a good-natured friend, indeed, who says this in defence of Mr. Gladstone.

The second of the two statements we have mentioned is this, that in taking office under Lord Palmerston Mr. Gladstone is not doing violence to his Conservative sympathies, because Lord Derby had once offered Lord Palmerston a share in his own Administration. Those persons who can gravely make use of such an argument as this must either have a singularly slender stock of political knowledge themselves, or else a most unmitigated contempt for the understandings of their hearers. Let us grant, for the sake of illustration, that the present is a Conservative Government, and let us suppose that at some future date Mr. Cobden should be entrusted with the formation of a Ministry. Would it be any justification of Conservatives who went over to Mr. Cobden that he had been offered the Board of Trade by Lord Palmerston? Placed in this light, a child can see the absurdity of the argument in question. But even let us go further, and grant that Lord Derby's overtures to Lord Palmerston are to be accepted as a token that his Lordship believed in the covert Conservatism of the noble Viscount. What then? Lord Palmerston, alone, separated from the Whig-Radical crew, and working in harness with Conservatives on each side of him,

is a very different man from Lord Palmerston, at the head of a Ministry formed for the express purpose of conciliating the Radicals. A Cabinet formed of such heterogeneous materials as the present one must be estimated by the newest and most startling feature it presents. That it is which must obviously give the differential form and colour to its deliberations. If the Radical element does not do this, the Radical party will simply have been bought and sold; and if Mr. Gladstone chooses to shelter himself behind any such unworthy stratagem, he is at liberty to do so. But we do not believe a word of it. The present Cabinet is, for the time being, a Radical Cabinet. There is no shutting our eyes to the fact. Lord John Russell has long shown himself utterly reckless on the subject. Lord Palmerston is the last of his name, and the deluge will not come in his time. The Dukes of Newcastle and Somerset, and the Earl of Granville, are mere instruments. Mr. Gladstone stands alone; and to justify his acceptance of office under Lord Palmerston by the offer once made to that nobleman by Lord Derby is an absurdity that could only have been bred in some academic brain remote from public affairs, and unacquainted with the conversation of mankind.

There remains, indeed, one consideration which has probably weighed with Mr. Gladstone more than any that we have hitherto discussed. We mean the behaviour of his intimate political friends who have refused to reunite themselves with the old Conservative party. But much as that example may have influenced Mr. Gladstone, his obedience to it is only another form of that weakness which we have

already described as unworthy of him. Although a more amiable, it is not a less unmanly failing, to stifle our conviction for the sake of private friendships than to do so for the sake of private enmities. The principle is the same in each case. If it was in Mr. Gladstone's power to have rehabilitated the Conservative party, it was just as criminal in him to have been withheld from doing so by love of Mr. Sidney Herbert, as by hate of Mr. Benjamin Disraeli. There is not a pin to choose between the two motives. If, indeed, both had co-existed in his mind, some allowance might have been made for human infirmity, subjected to so potent a pressure. But, as we have already stated, we believe there is no doubt that Mr. Gladstone has declared his willingness "to forget and forgive" all that had formerly taken place between himself and the Leader of the Opposition. Even were it not so, we could only extenuate his conduct. To justify it on such grounds would be as impossible in political morality, as it would be fatal to the character of statesmanship. But we deny the one allegation as a matter of fact, and we wholly repudiate the binding force of the other. If the rest of the gentlemen who broke off from the Conservative connexion in 1846 had not yet found a party with whom they could heartily coalesce, what was that to Mr. Gladstone? He had found one. He had begun, though somewhat late, to recognise the obvious truth that Free Trade was not a great question of Constitutional politics; that those who differed upon that point need differ upon no other; and that there was no valid reason why the unanimity which prevailed in the Conservative body before that question was mooted should

not exist again now that it is settled. If, indeed, in the course of the Free-trade agitation, certain politicians became conscious that the bonds of union once being broken, and party obedience suspended, their minds were taking a longer flight, and becoming aware of other and deeper differences which had before lain dormant, that might be a very good reason for their acting as they have done; but it is none at all for Mr. Gladstone. *His* mind had undergone nothing of the sort. His recent conduct has shown that on all Constitutional questions he is still the Tory member for Newark. If his old companions have drifted away from their moorings, is that any reason why he should throw his own opinions overboard in order to drift after them? This is, indeed, to elevate the means above the end—the person above the principle—the private pledge above the public good, to an absolutely effeminate degree.

Mr. Gladstone may rest assured that if he does not win the applause of his contemporaries, he will hardly find any compensation in the verdict of posterity. His offences have been repeatedly condoned, as men thought upon the splendid abilities, the rare accomplishments, and the hidden integrity, which seemed to make it presumptuous to judge him. But we venture to predict that Mr. Gladstone has now reached the limit of British forbearance. Those who profit most by his latest exhibition of caprice do not conceal their contempt for it. Those whom he has injured so deeply, and disappointed so causelessly, can never put faith in him again. They have been trifled with, played with, and abandoned as a suitor abandons his mistress when he hears that the vessel bearing home her fortune has gone to

the bottom of the sea. The wounds and divisions of twelve long years were gradually healing: the Conservative party had once more begun to put forth leaves and fruit, and wave its branches over the land; popular sympathy was enlisted in its favour; and the confidence and affection of the most popular and exemplary Sovereign that has ruled Great Britain for centuries was bestowed upon it: but one thing was wanting to ensure the young and growing fabric against the inextinguishable jealousy of the Whig houses, and the restless discontent of the manufacturing Radicals; but one thing was wanting to save Queen Victoria from a repetition of the insults inflicted on her grandfather by the Revolution potentates: that one thing was, that the chosen representative of the most Conservative constituency in England should have the moral courage to join a Conservative Administration! And yet that one thing could not be done. And what reason, we ask, for the twentieth time, could be assigned for not doing it? None, or worse than none. Either none, or else such as either Mr. Gladstone, or any man of one-tenth of his ability or honesty, should be ashamed to own. If, then, this great opportunity has been lost, this promising enterprise shattered by downright, unqualified capriciousness, it is difficult indeed to overrate the just indignation which all Conservatives must entertain towards the slave of such unpractical crotchets, and such sickly fastidiousness.

> If parts allure thee, think how Gladstone shined,
> The wisest, brightest, weakest of mankind,

will henceforward express the idea which the world at large will entertain of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Why is all this? What is really the peculiarity of this remarkable man which has made him, in turn, the hope of so many parties, and the deceiver of all? We are not going to overload this essay with biographical data, which are to be found in a dozen books of reference, and we shall, therefore, only remind our readers that Mr. Gladstone entered Parliament in 1832, as member for Newark, the pocket borough of the Duke of Newcastle. He was then in his twenty-third year: had taken the highest honours at Oxford, and was, as Lord Macaulay said of him seven years afterwards, "the hope of those stern, unbending Tories who follow, reluctantly and mutinously, a leader, whose experience and eloquence are indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor." His theological opinions immediately took the tone of that Anglican Catholicism, the revival of which, in the English Church, was almost coincident with his entry into Parliament. And it was in 1838, when the Tract agitation was at its height, that he brought out his celebrated work on the relations between Church and State. In 1841, he became Vice-President, and afterwards President of the Board of Trade, under Sir Robert Peel. In 1845, he resigned his post, in consequence of Sir Robert's Maynooth Grant. And in the same year he forfeited the confidence of the Duke of Newcastle, and his seat for Newark, on account of a pamphlet which he published on "Recent Commercial Legislation," defending the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel, but still declaring that Free Trade was "impracticable." He remained out of Parliament till 1847, thus escaping the grand Corn Law battle, and when he returned there, it

was as the representative of his present constituency. His conduct since that time must be pretty fresh in our readers' minds. The interest which he took in the Gorham case, showing itself in a letter on the Royal Supremacy addressed to the Bishop of London in 1850; his letter to Dr. Skinner, in 1851, on the functions of laymen in the Church; his speech on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill; his determined opposition to the Divorce Bill; and last, but not least, certain notorious passages in his Homeric volumes—all point alike to the predominant propensity of his mind. No arguments, of course, can prove such an assertion as this. Its truth, if it be true, is rather to be felt, than received as a demonstration. But it is an impression that sinks deeper and deeper into our minds the more we read and the more we listen to Mr. Gladstone. There is a clerical frame of mind, as well as a legal frame of mind, or a military frame of mind. In a clergyman it is proper and praiseworthy, and we seldom see a first-rate clergyman without it. It is peculiar to no class. We have observed it in churchmen of the broadest type, and most muscular principles, as well as in the boniest Tractarian or most unctuous Calvinist. It is a common thing to hear that clergymen are bad men of business. They are particularly apt to forget to consider in what light their conduct will appear to others. They are so impressed with the idea that their kingdom is not of this world, that they quite forget how often the kingdom of other men is. We know, of course, there is a pretty numerous class of men who remain, after ordination, exactly what they were before. But, except in very rare instances indeed, these are worse, not better, than their fellows. The average good sort of cler-

gyman is enveloped in a peculiar atmosphere which defies definition, but is felt by all who approach within a certain distance of him. Everything in his mind radiates from his Church as a grand centre of the universe. With some, the Church means one thing, and with some, another; but with all it is the monopolizing idea. Poetry, politics, science, war, and peace, are all scanned by him with a jealous eye, looking steadily to their bearings on this great omphalic point. His conversation though he never mention the word Church, is pervaded by a certain indefinite flavour that lets you know at once to whom you are speaking. It is not that his mind is narrow, so much as that it is close. Not that he over-rates the value of spiritual things, but that he has lost the faculty of apprehending the value of things temporal. He is consequently a bad judge, for the most part, of political or constitutional questions; either adhering blindly to a certain traditional code, or plunging wildly, and without a compass, into the various controversies of the day, where he is not only often lost himself, but helps to lose others.

Now, a considerable amount of this clerical ἦθος may be observed in Mr. Gladstone. He has an air of the cloister. There is in him very little of that peculiar practical excellence which Englishmen express by saying that Mr. Thompson is "a man of the world." He judges of politics far too much from the churchman's point of view. The ties of party, the balance of the constitution, the graduation of society, the sanctity of law, centralisation, and local administration, are not any of them subjects on which we should anticipate a great speech from Mr. Gladstone. We cannot imagine him grappling with such a theme, for instance, as

the expediency of life-peerages, or delivering a masterly dissertation on the admission of judges to Parliament. He looks—whether over or under these questions different minds will determine differently—but he does not look at them. And when he has to speak upon them his heart does not seem in his work. There is always danger, moreover, that his views of Foreign Policy should be affected by this clerkly temperament. It is notorious that during the Russian War a large party in England secretly detested the cause in which we were fighting, on the ground that we were helping a nation of infidels against a branch of the Catholic Church. Persons who thought in this way belonged to Mr. Gladstone's school, and it was more than whispered that Mr. Gladstone shared their sentiments. Thus he has all his life stood more or less aloof from those influences by which public men in this country are, for the most part, regulated. He has contracted a habit of ranking things first which they rank second, and of ranking things second which they rank first. He is a Conservative, clearly just as the majority of clergymen are Conservatives. But he is scarcely a practical Conservative. He does not consider it the first duty of a Conservative statesman to consider how legislation will affect the constitution of the country. He would not, of course, say this. Perhaps even he is not conscious of it. But we fear that he thinks far more of the special interests of one branch of the constitution than he does of the whole, forgetting that unless the whole is safe the parts cannot long flourish. This is thoroughly the Churchman's view. We speak not in mere bitterness. The conduct of the clergy on public occasions for many years past

completely justifies this language. We believe as strongly as any man in the catholic character of the Church of England. We would do everything to preserve her catholic ritual and ordinances in their integrity. But the High Churchmen (with Mr. Gladstone at their head) go the wrong way to work to accomplish this object, and that they will find out when it is too late. They can do nothing except by working steadily in connexion with a political party. Yet they will not consent to the only conditions on which party can be conducted. Thus for many years Mr. Gladstone has been led to under-estimate the importance of party obligations: to allow the general political aims of the constitutional party in this country to drop into a subordinate position in his mind, and to forget the importance of keeping together a compact and unanimous body of men pledged to the preservation of all our essential institutions. He has wandered quite away from this point of view; and that he has been wrong in so doing may be inferred, we think, from the fact that he has quite lost that hold upon the House of Commons to which his talents would have entitled him.

It is to be remarked also that Mr. Gladstone is, to some extent, wanting in other less purely intellectual qualities, the absence of which is an unquestionable drawback to any man who aspires to political leadership in England. Walpole, North, Pitt, Fox, Canning, Palmerston, Disraeli, have all an element of geniality, a breadth of temperament, a careless consciousness of power, a love of mischief, a spice of devilry, so to speak, in their composition, which wins upon the confidence of Englishmen. Mr. Gladstone is too

much of the good boy who sits quiet for fear of tearing his clothes. We never hear of him in connexion with popular sports. He never gives utterance to any of those passionate outbursts of feeling on some great national crisis, which live in the popular memory. He is a member, he would tell you, of a greater nation than England. He bows before a law more sacred than the British Constitution. His country is not bounded by the sea, nor his glories limited to the exploits of two insignificant islands. So be it. He may be a wiser man, a more sublime philosopher, and a better Christian than ordinary party politicians, but he is many, many degrees inferior as an English statesman.

Mr. Gladstone's changes of opinion have been remarkable even in these days of change. But we think little of that, except as testifying to a mental peculiarity of the man. Up to 1845 he was a declared Protectionist, and in 1847 he was a Free-Trader. In 1840 he was a High Churchman of the most uncompromising school; combining the doctrinal views of Dr. Pusey, with the economic theory of Arnold. Long ago he declared himself to have abandoned this position. He has changed his opinions on the admission of the Jews to Parliament, and exhibited remarkable vacillation on the question of Maynooth. But of all this we complain very little. His mind has been passing out of the logical phase into the practical—at least, we are willing to give him the benefit of this supposition. But under present circumstances we do not find fault with him because he has changed his opinions, but because he has not. We do not find fault with him for joining the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston; but for joining the Cabinet of Lord Palmer-

ston, thinking as he does upon Ecclesiastical and Parliamentary Reform. It is, however, characteristic of Mr. Gladstone, and thoroughly in accordance with our previous remarks upon him, that he himself should have seen nothing odd in the proceeding. He could not comprehend that the opposition to his return at Oxford could arise from any motive but spite. He could not, for the life of him, see that he had done anything extraordinary; anything calculated to startle, alarm, or disgust a Conservative constituency; or to put the confidence even of his friends to the severest test. All this he was incapable of understanding. And it is just this want of sympathy, this incapacity for placing himself in the position of another person, and for looking at himself from without, that will, we are confident, even prove fatal to Mr. Gladstone's success in the representative system of government.

It is a curious piece of inconsistency in Mr. Gladstone's character, that with all this mental perversity, he is, if we mistake not, a timid rather than a confident politician. He sees principles with great distinctness, but wants the moral firmness to act upon them. He is, like many very logically-minded men, suspicious of his own intellect. He is afraid to trust to it, and places himself in the hands of other people in every way inferior to himself. His sword is so sharp that he is afraid to use it for fear of cutting his fingers. So he borrows, we suppose, the blunter weapons of his friends. Metaphor apart, Mr. Gladstone evidently saw clearly enough at one time that it was his duty to join the Conservative party under Lord Derby. But when that conclusion threatened to separate him from his friends, he

shunned the responsibility of acting upon it. He could not believe he could be right. All reason certainly was for it. But were not people sometimes the dupes of reason? Was it possible that this plain and straightforward course of conduct was also the right course? Was he not deceiving himself? So the golden opportunity was lost. And then Mr. Gladstone did exactly the same thing over again, only positively instead of negatively. As he had distrusted his own confidence in Lord Derby, so he resolved to distrust his own want of confidence in Lord Palmerston. He had been heard to say he was the most unprincipled Minister he had ever known. But still people must not trust too much to their impressions. He preferred the impressions of two other gentlemen, and if he did wrong in joining the Cabinet, why then he persuaded himself that they were to blame and not he.

Mr. Gladstone's oratory is what we should expect from his character. He is a true orator, and he therefore never fails to persuade us he is in earnest. He is listened to with pleasure, for he has all the graces and refinement of an accomplished English gentleman. He is brimful of those allusions which the House of Commons still loves. He speaks with sufficient *bonhomie* and good-humour. His elocution is nearly perfect: his argument, as may be supposed, is always admirable; and when the subject suits him, he can rise to a high pitch of eloquence, grave and severe, extremely dignified and effective. But he does not penetrate his audience. He is seldom interrupted by great bursts of cheering. He never speaks with the weight of a man who has a party at his back; and he

speaks as if he felt this. He addresses an admiring, but not a sympathising, audience. He stands, as it were, upon a solitary eminence, enchaining the crowd below by the fascination of his presence and the beauty and force of his language: but when he has done, up rises one of themselves, who shares their passions and their prejudices, has led them in many a hard struggle, and has borne the stings of defeat and the triumph of success in their company, and with half the genius produces threefold the enthusiasm. Yet his support in a debate is eagerly sought after. "Will Gladstone speak?" is an inquiry anxiously repeated in the course of every important discussion. To have had Gladstone on their side is sufficient by itself to prevent the beaten party being laughed at. It is felt that the cause which he defends cannot, at least, be ridiculous. But, after all, the respect which is thus accorded to him as a man of genius is not worth so very much in the political market. He can make an opponent look very small for the time being, and therefore, of course, it is best to have him on our own side. But the value of his presence in the Cabinet is very disproportionate to his utility as a speaker; and as even this, owing to the causes we have mentioned, is not so great as it might be, we cannot believe that any sacrifices displeasing to the Radical party are likely to be made for his sake.

We cannot say we were surprised at the opposition which Mr. Gladstone encountered in the University of Oxford; and we will add, that we never read a lamer defence than that put forward in his letter to his constituents. With his vote against the Amendment to the

Address, he had discharged his duty to Lord Derby! What duty? He either owed Lord Derby nothing, or he owed him a great deal more. And the younger members of the University, who are, as yet, strangers to party strife, and whose admiration or dislike, however mistaken, is usually generous and sincere, showed pretty plainly what they thought of the matter. The instincts of seven or eight hundred cultivated and high-spirited young men are not to be despised, as Mr. *Punch*, perhaps, may some day discover. Our own opinion is, that a Conservative constituency ought to be represented by a Conservative; and that it is desirable, even from the Whig point of view, that Oxford should remain a Conservative constituency. The days are coming when a nucleus of healthy and philosophic Conservatism will be an invaluable blessing to this country, and Oxford has every qualification for supplying it. But if the traditions of the place are to be whistled down the wind as they have been of late—if the miserable fiction by which Mr. Gladstone imposes on himself be allowed to impose on the University—if a prominent member of a Cabinet composed of Whigs, Radicals, and Low Churchmen, be considered a sufficient good Conservative to represent Oxford, there is an end of the matter. But if the *genius loci* is to be expelled from the gardens and the halls he has so long inhabited, we are sorry it should be done so dirtily.

The old argument that a member is not a delegate, has, of course, been pressed into the service of Mr. Gladstone's supporters. It is one that we would not undervalue. But a child will see that a limit must be drawn somewhere. If

a member for Birmingham voted for the re-imposition of the Corn Laws, his constituents could hardly be called on to re-elect him, because he was not a delegate, and had a right to judge for himself what was best for the interests of the entire nation. This anti-delegate argument, if pushed too far, would tend to results subversive of our representative system. If we do not allow that interests are to be, to some extent, represented, we fall back upon the theory of numbers. If we do allow it, we must also allow, that when a member fails to represent the interests for the sake of which he was returned, he has forfeited his claim to sit for the constituents who returned him. Whether or no Mr. Gladstone's conduct be inconsistent with the promotion of those interests which the University of Oxford is supposed, even in the estimation of Mr. Gladstone's own supporters, to embody, these gentlemen must determine for themselves. But on a candid review of his behaviour, and his opportunities during the last eighteen months, we think it is perfectly monstrous to accuse all those persons who do think it inconsistent with those interests, of mere paltry spite. It is nonsense, moreover, to appeal to the maxim, *Semel electus, semper eligatur*, when no occasion has arisen for a century and a half of testing its adaptability to circumstances. The University has returned a succession of Tory representatives from the Revolution downwards. No occasion ever arose when the propriety of the maxim could be called in question. When Sir Robert Peel made up his mind to concede the Roman Catholic claims, he had the decency to resign his seat, and we must confess, that our opinion of Mr. Gladstone's good

taste and good sense would have been spared a considerable shock had he followed his example. But we must positively refuse to be bound, in these days of political transition, by any such venerable maxim as that quoted by the Dean of Christchurch; and if circumstances are ever to be allowed to interrupt its application, we can scarcely conceive of any more qualified to do so than those under which Mr. Gladstone recently presented himself.

We can only live in hope that the example of Mr. Gladstone's conduct may not operate with fatal effect upon the rising generation of statesmen. We cannot refuse the shelter of the precedent which it affords to the dishonest and unscrupulous, any more than we can to the virtuous and conscientious politician. For the future, when any notorious act of tergiversation is perpetrated in Parliament, "I am only doing what Mr. Gladstone did," will shut our mouths at once. That Mr. Gladstone should not have foreseen the bad use to which his example might be turned is characteristic of him, but is not the less deplorable to us. However, we have unburdened our minds—

——— flere et meminisse relictum est.

MR. DISRAELI, MAY, 1860.

THE career of a leading English statesman, since the Revolution of 1688, has been one of peculiar trials, yet, if prosperous, of peculiar happiness. Burleigh or Strafford, Sully or Richelieu, Alberoni or Metternich, while free from those restraints which encompass the Parliamentary statesman, are at the same time isolated from many of those circumstances which augment and sweeten his success. To enjoy the power of placing our schemes before the world in the most advantageous light, and in their full integrity, neither emasculated by the scruples, nor embarrassed by the suggestions, of inferior minds; to have none but ourselves to blame if our deserts are not acknowledged while we live; and to look back on the ripened results of a great policy, when we die; these are the privileges of independent and absolute rulers, to which the ministers of a Parliamentary Government will in vain aspire. On the other hand, the charm of acting with our fellow-men in the pursuit of some common object; of winning their confidence, of directing their energies, and of rewarding their devotion; are joys

which dwell apart from the grandeur of autocratic ministers, and compensate the constitutional statesman for the absence of unconditional authority. Such are the ideal pictures of the two positions. The real ones, it is to be feared! but seldom correspond to these colours. The sole minister lies too often at the mercy of court favourites; to the strokes of secret slander; to sudden and unaccountable disgrace. The Parliamentary chieftain must consume, in the management of men, too much of that time which is required for the consideration of measures; and must exhaust his energies in counteracting the intrigues of faction, in allaying jealousy, and quelling discontent when he would fain devote them exclusively to the public service. Hence in England, since the establishment of Parliamentary Government, the power of conducting a great party has become one of the chief qualifications for a statesman. Let him possess what other great qualities he may, without this one pre-eminently practical faculty, his talents are of little use. With it he can scarcely fail to perform invaluable services to his cause. As far as we can judge at present, the existence of two great parties is an inseparable characteristic of a free and a popular assembly; and whatever member of such an assembly shows the greatest aptitude for the organisation and discipline of party is the man who in reality gives effect to the principles on which it is founded, even though his name be not associated with a single measure of importance. The eminent man, whose name we have placed at the head of this article, is an excellent illustration of our remarks. Were we asked to describe his career up to the present time, in as few words as possible,

we should say that Mr. Disraeli was one of the greatest leaders of a party that England has ever seen. Having never been the minister of a majority, independent legislation has hitherto been out of his power. It is in the conduct of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, since the death of Lord George Bentinck, that his greenest laurels have been gathered: and were he himself, in turn, to be snatched away from us to-morrow, that service would alone constitute a sufficient title to the respect and gratitude of Conservatives.

The truth of this assertion will be apparent, if we compare the position and conduct of Mr. Disraeli from the year 1848, with that of other statesmen who have found themselves in analogous circumstances. The circumstances in which Mr. Fox found himself in 1784 were in some respects analogous; yet if Fox had rallied the Whig party as Mr. Disraeli rallied the Conservatives, he still would have achieved a less remarkable exploit than the right hon. gentleman; for his party was at once more numerous, and showed a far greater number of experienced statesmen in its ranks. But Mr. Fox not only did not do this; he did exactly the reverse. Instead of restoring his party, he destroyed it. He cut it down to the ground, so that nearly half a century elapsed ere its pristine amplitude was recovered. Again, after the Reform Bill of 1832, Sir Robert Peel found himself in analogous circumstances; and he did restore his party to efficiency. But by the aid of what advantages and auxiliaries? Half the great statesmen in the country, whom the people had looked up to for years, were his confederates. The Church, disgusted by

the ecclesiastical policy of the Whigs, was on his side to a man. Popular distress, resulting in Chartism, all told against the Government. Whereas, in 1848, every one of these advantages was on the other side. The experienced Conservative statesmen, whom Peel had trained to affairs, stood sullenly aloof. A large and influential section of the Church of England believed itself represented by these gentlemen. The agricultural distress which undoubtedly prevailed at that time made the preponderant interests of the country still more jealous of Lord Derby. The men upon whom the leader of the opposition could actually depend for a division were fewer than one hundred and fifty; and when Lord George Bentinck divided the House upon his motion concerning Irish railways, supposed to be his strongest point, he mustered to his colours but one hundred and eighteen members. It seemed that "the great Conservative party" was on the brink of dissolution, or was dwindling away to the dimensions of a mere sect, like the Puritans under the Second Charles, or the Jacobites under the Second George.

It was under these discouraging circumstances that Mr. Disraeli was summoned to the helm. Lord George Bentinck died in the autumn of 1848, and in the following February Mr. Disraeli took his seat on the opposition benches as the unquestioned leader of his party in the lower House. The total prostration of the party which now committed itself to his charge has never been properly understood outside the walls of Parliament. The ranks of that sturdy phalanx which divided against the repeal of the Corn Laws had been greatly thinned by the general

election of 1847; and, as we have just stated, there were not one hundred and fifty men upon whose support Mr. Disraeli could reckon. But there were more than a hundred members known by the designation of "Peelites," who belonged to the landed interest, and were still thorough Conservatives upon every article except one, which had constituted their original creed. That one was, of course, the doctrine of Protection. Under these circumstances, two modes of action might have presented themselves to a statesman placed in the situation in which Mr. Disraeli now found himself. He might have recommended his supporters to forget that they had ever been a party, to break the continuity of their political existence, and abandoning altogether the constitutional functions of an opposition, to permit themselves to be fused with the general mass of the House of Commons, and wait until future circumstances should evolve two entirely fresh parties from the chaos. He might, we say, had he thought proper, have tendered his supporters this advice. That they would have accepted it, is an idle supposition. But ought he, nevertheless, to have tendered it? No practical politician would think twice about the question we are aware. But, for the sake of persons who are not practical politicians, we may be excused if we offer a remark or two upon the subject, superfluous as they may appear to those who understand its true nature. That such a course of conduct was not to be expected from men smarting under the sense of recent injury, whether real or fancied, and that it must have been adopted at a great sacrifice of dignity and moral influence, seems hardly to require proof. But,

what is more important, it cannot be supposed that even in the excitement and irritation of the Protectionist controversy, men had entirely forgotten everything which had gone before. They could not forget that the Conservative party had been called into existence to combat other dangers as well as that of Free Trade. They could not unlearn in two sessions the lesson of fifteen years. If nothing remained for a Conservative party to perform, when our Protectionist duties were repealed, then were the former professions of Sir Robert Peel himself mere empty words, and the Conservative reaction of 1841 a mischievous delusion. Such thoughts as these must have passed through the minds of Sir Robert's more immediate followers, as well as of the hundred and fifty who now ranged themselves under Mr. Disraeli. In the next place we must remember, that twelve years ago the doctrine of Whig Conservatism, now quite familiar to the public, was yet unborn. The Whigs were still the great party of innovation, still the party whose enmity to the Church, whose ruinous finance, and whose mismanagement of Ireland the Tories had been called to counteract. If the Conservatives, therefore, struck their colours, and abandoned their position in despair, what guarantee had they that the mistakes of Lord Melbourne's administration would not be re-enacted? It was true they could do little at present. But it was necessary to keep together the nucleus of a Conservative opposition, which there was every reason to suppose, from the natural inclinations of the great bulk of "the Peelites," would slowly but surely unite round itself the representatives of the landed interest. In deciding, therefore, *not* to tender the advice aforesaid to

his party, Mr. Disraeli was, we think, not only adopting the only practical course that was open to him, but that also which was required by the real interest of the Constitution. And it is impossible to say to what extent the revival of Conservative feeling throughout the country at the present moment, which alone has encouraged Whig Conservatism to show its face, is due to the example of the Conservative party in Parliament during the last eleven years, and to the gallantry and perseverance which they displayed in the face of overwhelming odds.

Mr. Disraeli, then, upon assuming the reins of management, adopted the other and bolder alternative, and, instead of recommending a policy that would have ended in virtual disembodiment, inculcated on his supporters the necessity and the feasibility of healing the schism in the party, and of recovering the body of seceders. To effect this result was paramount to every other consideration: and we would take this opportunity of observing that in speaking of Mr. Disraeli as offering his advice upon the subject, we are merely anticipating every possible way of looking at his conduct. We say it was the part of a wise statesman to have given such advice, if the alternative were ever mooted; but it is improbable that it ever was. It is much more likely that, by the practical men who were concerned, all the above arguments were tacitly assumed as axioms, and that Mr. Disraeli was called upon to lead their party without a thought being given to the eligibility of any other course. Be that as it may, Mr. Disraeli accepted the responsibility and undertook the accomplishment of the task, the reconstitution, namely, of the Conservative party

in the House of Commons. *This* was "his policy," and to this end all his efforts were directed. To have restored to that shattered and dispirited minority their pristine strength and courage; to have won back to their side the mass of their estranged associates; and to have created from their ranks the material of an able administration; these are the right hon. gentleman's true triumphs; this is the work which he was specially commissioned to undertake; this is the work which he has so patiently and successfully accomplished.

Mr. Disraeli commenced his labours in 1849 by his motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the "Burdens upon Land," or the unequal pressure of taxation on the agricultural classes. The existence of considerable distress among the farmers was admitted on both sides of the House: and by Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright in particular. That some effort should have been made in Parliament to mitigate the severity of the transition-state through which agriculture was then passing, was perfectly natural and justifiable. But the means by which Mr. Disraeli sought to accomplish this end at once displayed his talents for generalship. The "Peelites" were, as country gentlemen, still deeply interested in obtaining compensation for their tenantry. As Free-traders, they were precluded from supporting anything which savoured of Protection. But a motion which conveyed a boon to the landed interest, without any taint of the exploded system, would be sure to meet with their approval, and probably with their open support. And to accustom the "Peelites" to find themselves in the same lobby with the Conservatives upon

questions of common interest, was a primary object with the statesman whose policy was "reconciliation." The accuracy of his judgment was proved by the result of the division; there being for the motion 189, to 280 against it—an increase of, at least, forty votes upon the largest number of supporters which the Conservatives had hitherto mustered. Following up his success, in the year 1850 he introduced another motion on the subject of agricultural distress; and, on a division, showed an accession to his side of no less than sixty-three members, Government being reduced to a majority of only twenty-one. Twenty-two members who had voted against him in 1849 voted with him on the present occasion, and among them no less a personage than Mr. Gladstone, who then, for the first time since 1846, found himself in opposition to Sir Robert Peel. In the same year, Mr. Disraeli supported the repeal of the malt-tax,* and spoke on the subject of county rates, and the pressure of the income-tax upon tenant farmers, pointing out clearly and forcibly the real disadvantages to which they were subject: but giving utterance to not a syllable that could be interpreted into the recommendation of a retrogressive financial policy. The result of these tactics soon became apparent in the increase both of numbers and moral weight, which his party now experienced. In two years they had not only rallied from their prostration, but had become actively formidable. It was no longer possible to ignore their existence, or to neglect the

* This, it must be remembered, was before the imposition of the war-taxes.

impression which they had made upon the public mind. In 1851, the distress of the agricultural classes was acknowledged in the Queen's Speech. And when, early in the Session, Mr. Disraeli moved that Ministers should be called on to introduce some remedial measures in conformity with the language which they had advised Her Majesty to adopt, their former majority of twenty-one was found to have sunk to fourteen: the numbers being 267 for the motion, and 281 against it. The result of this division, in connexion with two other circumstances, brought about the resignation of Lord John Russell. He had got himself into a difficulty by the celebrated "Durham Letter," from which he saw no mode of extricating himself but by retiring from his post. And it was shrewdly suspected that the extraordinary minority* in which Government was soon after placed, upon Mr. Locke King's motion for the extension of the county franchise, had been contrived by Lord John Russell himself, as a pretext for resignation. But these two divisions were the only reasons he assigned to Her Majesty for relinquishing her service; and, of course, the more weight we attach to them, the greater will appear the success of Mr. Disraeli's policy: that policy being, as we must never for one moment forget, not so much the passage of particular measures as the reconstruction of the Conservative Party upon something like its ancient basis.

That reconstruction he had now effected, as far as was, perhaps, possible, in the existing Parliament. Many of the Peelites had returned to their allegiance. Some few

* *i. e.* 48 to 100.

had fairly settled down as Liberals. The heads of the party alone stood aloof from both sides: dissatisfied with themselves, morbidly jealous of the men who out of the despised remnant of Conservatives had built up a great party; and fearing that the position to which they themselves had long aspired was now lost to them for ever. Such, indeed, was not the fact. For though the leadership of the party in the House of Commons was never formally offered to Mr. Gladstone, it was perfectly well understood that Mr. Disraeli was at this time willing to waive his own claims, and hand over the gallant army, which he had created with such infinite labour, to the command of that gentleman. In 1851 he might have stepped in at the eleventh hour to enjoy all the fruits of Mr. Disraeli's exertions during the burden and heat of the day. But Mr. Gladstone has a wide imagination, and he reserved himself for greater things. Whether he would not have been wiser to accept the overtures made to him by Lord Derby in 1851 and 1855, as well as in 1858, we cannot pretend to say till we see the end of his career. He seems to be drifting further and further away from his early friends, and from his mature convictions. But whatever were the reasons which withheld him from returning to the country party on the first of these occasions, it is only probable that the continued contemplation of Mr. Disraeli, in the position which under other circumstances he would have coveted for himself, must have tended to foster a very unsatisfactory state of feeling. To return to 1851; when Lord Stanley, to whom the Queen had applied on the resignation of Lord John Russell, had failed in his

appeal to Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Gladstone to assist him in the construction of a Ministry; when Lord John Russell himself had failed in a similar request, and when the Peelites, in turn, had pronounced themselves incapable of governing alone; affairs, as our readers will remember, returned to their original condition, and the old Ministry resumed possession of the Treasury benches for the remainder of the year. With 1852, however, it became evident that Lord John could struggle on no longer. The defection of Lord Palmerston must have led to his resignation very shortly, even without the back-handed blow inflicted on him by the noble Viscount on the question of the militia. Early in that year he resigned the Seals of Office, and this time Lord Derby felt obliged to answer the demand made upon him both by Her Majesty and his own party.

It is not to be wondered at that he shrank from doing so before. To hold office against a powerful and unscrupulous majority, with a Cabinet of experienced statesmen, would tax the energies of most men. But the Conservatives had to face such a majority with a Cabinet that was almost wholly inexperienced; composed of members who had taken so little part in public affairs, that the names even of some of the most eminent were absolutely unknown to the Prime Minister. Eleven of them were sworn in Privy Councillors on the same day. The style in which they played their parts is as creditable to their own talents as to the discernment which selected them. Their subsequent career has fully justified the choice. But it is not surprising that their want of familiarity with official work

should have been regarded by Lord Derby as a serious impediment to success.

But this was not the worst. Whether any circumstances at all could have enabled the Conservatives to retain their hold of office in 1852, is a matter of conjecture. But it cannot be denied that the actual circumstances under which they did take office were extremely unfortunate. By the spring of 1853 the agricultural distress would have passed away, and with it the necessity for proposing any plans of mitigation, inalienably associated in the public mind with the system of Protection. The Tories came into office in the spring of 1852, were compelled to dissolve Parliament in the summer of the same year, and were forced by the Opposition, who saw the approaching turn of affairs, as well as the Conservatives themselves, to introduce their financial measures before they could take advantage of the change. Could the dissolution of Parliament have been deferred but for another nine months, the agriculturists would have completed the term of their adversity, and the necessity for attempting some relief would no longer have existed. Thus Lord Derby's candidates, unencumbered by the imputation of Protectionist opinions, would have met with more support throughout the kingdom, nor have been dragged down in the water by a class of men who were on the point of discovering that they were able to swim alone. But unfortunately the old Protectionist party in the House of Lords was so strong, and so wedded to their opinions, that Lord Derby was totally unable to announce his frank acceptance of Free Trade. Thus an appeal to the country became immediately necessary, and the battle, which might

afterwards have been fought upon equal terms, was now fought at a disadvantage. But even then, had it been possible for the new Government to defer the introduction of their finance measures till the usual time, that is, till the month of March or April, matters might have turned out differently: for the disappearance of suffering among the body of their especial supporters would have left them more at liberty in the construction of their Budget. But the Opposition hurried on the meeting of Parliament in the month of November, and insisted on the immediate announcement by Ministers of their financial policy. Assured of a fixed majority, Lord Derby might have boldly refused to be forced out of the usual track; but his weakness left him no alternative but submission. The Budget of Mr. Disraeli was produced in December, amid the applauses of the *Times* newspaper, and the commendation of the veteran Mr. Hume. But it inevitably contained provisions which enabled the Opposition to declare that it was conceived in a Protectionist spirit; and it was finally rejected by a majority of nineteen. Not, however, on its merits, if we can believe its principal opponent: for the two very features in Mr. Disraeli's Budget which Mr. Gladstone made the groundwork of his attack, he has himself subsequently adopted on a larger scale and with less provocation; we mean the appropriation of moneys to the service of the year which were not raised by the revenue of the year, and the acceptance of the income-tax as a probably permanent impost. In all this, however, there was nothing but the inevitable force of circumstance of which the Conservatives could complain. They had played a losing game with

spirit. They had passed some important measures, and when they yielded, they yielded only to the expiring effort of a particular prejudice, from which neither genius nor prudence could have delivered them. We believe that the party in general were fully sensible of this truth, and were not at all dissatisfied with the result of their brief experiment. The bulk of them felt that their leaders had been tried and not found wanting; that they had fought a good fight, and come out of the contest with *eclat*. So that, although the Whigs and Whig-Radicals now everywhere gave out that the Conservative party had thrown its last stake, and would never hold its head up any more; such was not the feeling of the Conservatives themselves, and they waited with patience, and confidence in the tact and statesmanship of their leader, till a fresh opportunity should occur.

During the two following years the position of Mr. Disraeli was less arduous than it had been. The Conservative party, well satisfied with his exertions in their behalf, and not doubting that the break-up of the Coalition government would speedily give them another turn, kept their ranks together, and suffered little or nothing from desertion. Of their expectations at this time we may say:

> Audiit, et voti Phœbus succedere partem
> Mente dedit, partem volucres dispersit in auras.

The Coalition government perished within two years of its formation, and the Conservatives were again invited to assume the reins of power. But the prospect which now shone before their eyes was speedily overclouded. After having made unsuccessful overtures to Lord Palmerston

and Mr. Gladstone, Lord Derby declined the responsibility of taking office at so formidable a crisis of affairs, and the golden opportunity was lost. We fully appreciate the patriotic motives by which Lord Derby was actuated. He, no doubt, felt that the necessity of a strong government at such a moment was paramount to every other consideration. But we have often thought that a strong government might have been formed under the noble Earl just as well as under Lord Palmerston. The Parliament was Lord Derby's Parliament, and his supporters were nearly three hundred. They numbered in their ranks men who had already shown themselves capable of administering the departments of Government. There was every chance that a dissolution, if he were driven to a dissolution, would give him a net majority. We are quite aware of the presumption of criticising Lord Derby's decision. But it is necessary to dwell upon the circumstances of that year, because they materially affected the position occupied by the subject of this article. Up to that time the Conservatives had put their hand to the plough, and had not looked back. They had complete confidence in both their leaders, and could not fail to be sensible of what they owed to Mr. Disraeli. Within less than four years from the death of Lord George Bentinck, when their position was such as we have described, he had seated them in office. It was due to him that the shock of defeat and expulsion had not injured their *morale;* and that, when again it seemed likely that her Majesty would require their services, they were at once prepared to take office with an excellent prospect of success. But when, Lord Derby relinquished this chance, the hearts

of his party for the first time misgave them. Lord Palmerston was apparently in office for the term of his natural life. All the prizes of power, and all the rewards of perseverance vanished into some distant future. Once more a spirit of apathy and disaffection invaded the ranks of the Conservatives, and once more it devolved on Mr. Disraeli to reanimate the disheartened host.

How was he to do it? Any active opposition to the Government while the war was still proceeding was not to be thought of: and patiently and anxiously did Mr. Disraeli wait till the return of peace, and some blunder on the part of his adversary, should give him the opportunity he sought for. Politics are like war: it is sometimes necessary to strike a vigorous blow, more for the sake of encouraging our own men than of destroying the enemy; and for a chance of doing this Mr. Disraeli had now to look out. But there was still another and more important object which again seemed to be within his reach. The dissolution of the Coalition Government had set free Mr. Gladstone. Had it not at last become possible to reconcile him with his old friends? Taking advantage of the unpopular provisions relating to the Income-tax contained in the Budget of Sir C. Lewis, in 1857, Mr. Disraeli brought forward an amendment which secured the support of Mr. Gladstone and Sir James Graham, and was based on calculations which time has completely justified. But the dissatisfaction which long exclusion from office, coupled with dislike of the Peelites, had bred in the Conservatives peeped out on this occasion, and some five-and-twenty members of the party voted with Lord Palmerston on the

division, who thus obtained a majority of eighty. Lord Derby's indignation at the conduct of his own supporters was openly expressed. But it was, nevertheless, repeated on the occasion of the Chinese division; and Lord Palmerston, appealing to the country while public feeling was yet hot, and before the nation had had time to reflect upon the real bearings of the question, obtained that celebrated majority which eventally became his ruin. It is needless to remind our readers, at this distance of time, that the cry relied upon by Government was, that British officers must be supported in the discharge of their duty. We should certainly be among the last to deny such a proposition. But stereotyped cries of this kind are always liable to abuse. When the Bow-street magistrate lays a fine on some nocturnal offender, informing him gravely, at the same time, that "the police must be supported," the phrase may, and generally does, imply that the police have been assaulted by the prisoner in the discharge of their duty. But it may also, and occasionally does, mean that the prisoner has been assaulted by the police, in violation of their duty. And, though the phrase is a convenient one for the magistrate, enabling him to stifle remonstrance, and proceed with the business of the day, it is fortunate for the public that the misuse of it is occasionally exposed, and the itching fingers of that most respectable force restrained within due bounds. Our readers, indeed, may remember that a reaction had taken place against Lord Palmerston before the general election was over. But it came too late; and his triumph for the moment was complete.

Now we must remember that this division, and its subse-

quent results, were none of Mr. Disraeli's seeking. Viewed merely as a question of strategy, it was not a good issue on which to try a fall with Government. Less keen-sighted politicians than Mr. Disraeli foresaw the result of a clever appeal to the British Lion. But when the motion was brought forward by Mr. Cobden, he had no alternative but to support it, or to belie his own convictions. The Chinese debate, therefore, was not a party motion, and Mr. Disraeli was not answerable for its results. These, we know, were sufficiently disastrous. But the situation of affairs was not without its compensating features. The Peelites as a party were dissolved. The support of the thirty Conservatives who voted with Mr. Bentinck had placed a wider gulf than ever between Lord Palmerston and the Liberals. The second association of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli had considerably diminished the gulf between himself and the Conservatives. It is no disparagement of the gentlemen who supported Lord Palmerston to say, that the reconciliation of Mr. Gladstone with his former friends would not have been too dearly purchased by their secession. And there can be no doubt that Mr. Gladstone was at this time approximating nearer and nearer to a formal junction with the Conservatives. Lord Palmerston's alliance with Lord Shaftesbury, his conduct on the Divorce Bill, the conduct of his supporters upon Church Rates and Parliamentary Reform, were all at variance with the most cherished convictions of the member for the University of Oxford. The financial principles of Sir Cornewall Lewis were so abhorrent to his own views, that he united with Mr. Disraeli in opposing him, although between himself

and the leader of the Opposition there had been grave differences of opinion about the true nature of an income-tax. Finally, when the Conservatives had resolved to support Mr. Milner Gibson's amendment on the second reading of the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, they found Mr. Gladstone on their side. Lord Palmerston, as we know, was beaten on the division, and resigned, to make way for Lord Derby. And thus a second time, in the teeth of great discouragements, and after a long and uphill fight, Mr. Disraeli had brought his party into power, with the full sanction of that statesman whom they were all most desirous to secure, and amidst the general congratulations of the independent organs of the press. For the difference between the votes given in favour of the first reading of the bill, and in favour of Mr. Gibson's amendment, was ignored only by Lord Palmerston's particular supporters, and was fully recognised by all impartial persons who professed any acquaintance with the facts.

We have now brought our sketch down to the year 1858, which forms an epoch in the history of modern Conservatism. The party was in office once more, with the old majority of 120 against them; and though it would, no doubt, be inactive for awhile, they naturally could not count on its forbearance after the first few months. The India Bill was the first measure of importance which occupied their attention; and though the adverse majority took care to embarrass them as much as possible, without incurring the odium of unseating them, they passed that measure with credit, and derived considerable lustre from the admirable behaviour of Lord Stanley. The celebrated

resolution of Mr. Cardwell, relative to the Canning Despatch, which the Liberals expected to carry by a majority, first of 100, then of 80, and afterwards of 40 or 50, but which finally had to be withdrawn amid the derision of the whole House, strengthened their hands still further, and made them, in fact, safe for the remainder of the session. Who that remembers the supercilious air of the Whig party, and the vaunting language of their journals—who that saw their understrappers swaggering about the Reform Club, and predicting a majority of ninety, but can sympathise with the witty exultation of the Slough banquet?

But it was obvious to Mr. Disraeli that this was a state of things which it was neither possible nor desirable should last. The government of the country by a minority of the House of Commons, except as a mere temporary expedient, was incompatible with government by party. And that government by party should continue to flourish and endure was obviously the determination of the Whigs. No reinforcement which the Conservative party could hope for, under the existing system, would give them the requisite majority for establishing their own principles. Neither the more conservative section of the Whigs, nor the moderate section of the Independents, showed any symptoms of an intention to unite with the Tories. Mr. Gladstone had refused to join. Lord Palmerston, to whom the leadership of the House of Commons had been twice offered, at Mr. Disraeli's suggestion, had refused to join. The idea of any such junction had become an idle dream, by which Mr. Disraeli himself, and the more practical members of his party, had long

ceased to be deluded. But it obtained great currency out of doors; and it has been since made a subject of complaint against Mr. Disraeli, that he did not act in obedience to it. But that experienced statesman knew very well that there was little chance of any such amalgamation while the Whig party continued to be under the guidance of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell: while the Liberals, he knew, would only unite with him as a temporary expedient to accomplish their own purposes.* No dissolution, on the other hand, would bring the party up to a greater strength than three hundred. They had been fluctuating now between three hundred and one hundred and fifty for ten years, and saw no better prospect for the future. A majority of pure Conservatives was, therefore, impossible. A majority, composed of strangers, allured by some special measure, and disappearing when that was passed, was of no permanent value. Experience had shown this. And if no new remedy could be applied to the numerical deficiency of the party, it was better that they should give up the struggle at once, and resign themselves to the pleasures of opposition for the rest of their existence. The question then arose, was Parliamentary Reform such a remedy? If so, the Conservatives were perfectly at liberty to introduce one. There is no reason in the world why the Conservatives should not give us a Reform Bill just as much as a Budget or a Beer Bill. The subject is open to all comers, and was first mooted by a Tory. A Reform Bill which would give

* *Vide* Sir John Walsh's *Practical Results of the Reform Act of* 1832, who emphatically confirms this view.

them a majority, and thus enable them to act upon their principles, could not very logically be called a desertion of those principles. If any such measure then was necessary to the interests of the party, it was not inconsistent with their honour. It had, moreover, been promised in her Majesty's speeches for three or four years, so that she was in a manner committed to its adoption. The public a year ago was strongly, though quietly, in its favour; and to come to lower considerations which weigh strongly, nevertheless, with a certain class of purist politicians, the introduction of a Reform Bill by Mr. Disraeli was the only thing that prevented the expulsion of Government from office at whatever moment Lord Palmerston might choose. For some of these assertions we need only refer our readers to the usual sources of information in the shape of newspapers and periodicals. One year ago no one ventured to even hint that Lord Derby could have shelved the Reform question. Then, with Liberals, such as writers in the *Times*, it was a national requirement: with extreme Tories it was, at the worst, but a necessary evil. A year has passed away, and the *Times* thinks it an evil which was scarcely necessary, while extreme Tories denounce it as a blunder. They are both, like too many of us, wise after the event. That such language has now become possible is exclusively due to the late ministers. By adopting Parliamentary Reform, they took it out of the pale of party questions, and caused it for the first time to be examined on its merits. The result we see; and, as usual, we forget the authors. But had a Conservative Government assumed an attitude of hostility to Reform, the excitement on the subject, which

was languid, but not extinct, would at once have burst into a flame, and all the old watchwords of party have been revived in full virulence. To argue from the state of feeling which exists now to what it might have been possible to do then, is to confound the child with the parent. The disinclination to Reform which we observe at present, has arisen out of the Bill of 1859. Yet we are told that this disinclination is the best proof that the Bill of last year was unnecessary. Such is the logic of a certain class of politicians. A dispassionate consideration of the whole question has set the public mind against it. But till it became clear that the Conservatives were not going to resist or to evade the demand, it was never considered dispassionately. In the absence of the excitement which a struggle of the old kind would have been certain to produce, men have lately turned their eyes upon the probable results of the measure itself, and it is not too much to say, that the sight has given them a distaste for it, to which they were before strangers. But their minds were very far from being in this state in the beginning of 1859. The *Times* then repeatedly declared that a Reform Bill was absolutely necessary, and had there been the slightest show of attempting to evade it on the part of a Conservative Government, Lord John Russell would have moved a resolution which must infallibly have unseated it at once.

It seems to us, therefore, that both the honour of the Crown, the state of public feeling, and the interest of the Tory party, alike demanded some measure of Reform from Lord Derby. The Crown was pledged to it. The people demanded it, if not on any very intelligible principle, yet

with sufficient distinctness to make its refusal fatal, at all events to a Tory Administration: while the interests of the Tory party would, it seemed, be better consulted by redressing the inequalities of the Reform Act, than by fruitless efforts at drawing a Conservative majority from the existing constituencies. But there were, as we have said, other and more immediately practical reasons for undertaking to deal with this question. In January, 1859, the troubles on the Continent were thickening. It was evident from the first that Lord Palmerston intended to make use of them as a lever for uprooting the Administration. He was in the receipt of constant and confidential information from the Emperor of the French, who regarded him as a martyr in the imperial cause. He had it, therefore, in his power, to choose his moment of attack, whenever he had reason to believe it would be more than usually embarrassing. In the mean time he had the difficulty of the *Chartes et Georges* on which to found a resolution against Government, should the Austro-French controversy not furnish him with a better one. What could Government expect from a hostile resolution of this nature in a House of Commons where they had considerably less than three hundred supporters, and where they had been placed in a minority upon questions of importance no less than six times within the first month of the session? Obviously nothing but defeat, and that by so large a majority as to preclude any appeal to the country. Had a motion of this kind been introduced while the introduction of a Reform Bill was still uncertain, it is calculated that the Opposition would have drawn together a majority of eighty. How was this to be

prevented? There was clearly only one chance. To promise the introduction of the Reform Bill without delay. This promise would stave off any hostile resolution, for the House and the country would not sanction the expulsion of ministers before giving their Reform Bill a hearing; and there were good hopes that a liberal, yet well-balanced and carefully considered measure, would be accepted by the House, and strengthen the hands of Government so much as to leave them nothing to fear from other quarters. It was a wise and spirited policy, and the extreme closeness of the struggle which ensued, against such apparently heavy odds, is the best proof of its sagacity. The Reform Bill which Government introduced contained so many popular and felicitous ideas, and was distinguished by so obviously earnest a desire to grapple with the real imperfections of the existing system, that Lord John Russell *dared* not allow it to go into committee on the one hand, nor openly to resist the second reading on the other. He accordingly framed his celebrated resolution to prevent the second reading coming on, and artfully based it on that one provision in the bill, which, taken by itself, presented some appearance of unpopularity. We mean the exclusion of borough freeholders from the county constituencies. Enlarging on this so-called "measure of disfranchisement," though, as he was often reminded, there had never been a Reform Bill yet which did not contain measures of disfranchisement, he succeeded, after a hard-fought debate, in mustering a majority of thirty-five. But this was sufficient for the purposes of Ministers. From the majority of one hundred and twenty to have been able to strike off no less than

eighty-five upon the critical division of the Session, was a proof that the tide of public opinion was turning in their favour, and amply justified the dissolution of Parliament. At first, their prospects were highly favourable. But, ere long, an auxiliary came to the assistance of their adversaries with which it was impossible to contend. The Italian war broke out. What private understanding existed between Lord Palmerston and the French Emperor: by what carefully-laid plans it was contrived that the invasion of Lombardy by Austria, and the general election in England should occur simultaneously, it will be for the future historian to explain. But that the coincidence was not purely accidental is, we believe, a very general opinion among those who have enjoyed the best opportunities of judging. The Emperor is far too wise a man to be an ungrateful one. But in this particular case both gratitude and self-interest pointed in the same direction. That the Whigs should be restored to power was the reward most acceptable to Lord Palmerston. That they should be restored by an anti-Austrian agitation, was of all possible events the one most serviceable to the Emperor. When the interests of two parties are thus so completely identified, there is no necessity that any formal bargain should be struck. Each has too much at stake in fulfilling his part of the transaction to leave room for suspicion of the other: and we do not therefore mean to assert that anything like a regular contract was concluded between the Emperor and the Statesman. We content ourselves with repeating that the invasion of Lombardy, occurring when it did, was extremely fortunate for Lord Palmerston, and much to be desired by Napoleon, and we leave the conclusion to our readers.

Its effect upon the English elections was sufficiently marked to reduce the contemplated gains of the Conservatives by a few, but though few, still precious, votes. But its influence operated most disastrously upon the independent Liberal members, who, on the whole, had been prepared to go with Government. The cry that ministers could have prevented the war—that they had done their best, it must be owned—but that their foolish Austrian sympathies had neutralised their best intentions, was now the cry sent up from every Whig candidate in the kingdom, and every mouthpiece of the party. The effect was naturally most damaging. Yet for one moment longer the battle seemed to hang in suspense. The Whigs had created a bad impression against Government. But what were they to do with it now that they had got it? It extended only to the subject of foreign affairs. Yet no vote of censure on the management of foreign affairs could be proposed till the Government papers were on the table. But if, in the interim, ministers were allowed to proceed with the business of the session, they would be gaining strength every day, and it would, perhaps become impossible to dislodge them before the prorogation of Parliament. To turn their majority to account the Whigs must strike the blow at once, while the party feeling, kindled by the excitement of the election, was still hot, and they could reckon on their men with certainty. Perhaps, too, they were willing to surrender some portion of the advantage which a direct motion upon foreign affairs might have possessed, for the sake of avoiding the possible disclosures of the Government correspondence, and the risk of a death-blow to their repre-

sentations, which, as it turned out, these papers actually contained. The result of their deliberations was, that instead of a resolution condemnatory of the Government foreign policy brought forward by Lord Palmerston, the conduct of the assault was confided to the hands of Lord John Russell. Any particular issue was now, therefore, given up; and the assailants were driven to rely upon a sweeping charge of general and unqualified incapacity. It is now clear that Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli together had conducted the policy of their party with such consummate skill, that no particular point of it was open to a successful charge. All that the Opposition could say was, that Government could not pass their measures, which was only equivalent to saying that, previously to the dissolution, they had not possessed a majority. But as this had not been held a sufficient reason for displacing them before, there was no particular reason why it should have been thought so then. Here it was that the suspicions so studiously disseminated against their foreign policy just turned the scale. In a House of 633 members they were beaten by a majority only of thirteen; and of this thirteen several afterwards declared that had they known the truth upon the subject, they should have voted on the opposite side.

Such is the history of the long and desperate party struggle in which the two sessions of 1859 were consumed. That any portion of the time required by public business *should* be so consumed is, no doubt, much to be regretted. But if the remarks of the eminently philosophic and impartial statesman, which we have quoted on a previous

page, are correct, then it is evident, not only that great and protracted party conflicts must periodically occur, to the total neglect of public business, but also that the power of leading a party in battle is a qualification inferior to none which an English statesman can possess. Yet since the younger Pitt struggled through a whole winter against the furious and repeated charges of a Whig majority, no other display of gallantry and skill has been witnessed in the House of Commons equal to that exhibited by Mr. Disraeli and his party. He fought their battle with consummate coolness and judgment. They obeyed his directions with unflinching confidence and fortitude. During the time that he led the House of Commons, many new supporters had been converted into fast friends; and some old enemies into avowed allies. Among the latter was Mr. Gladstone. Notwithstanding the strong and independent convictions which that gentleman possesses, both on ecclesiastic and foreign politics, he never for one moment hesitated to support Lord Derby's Government, deeply implicated as it was in both these subjects. His mission to the Ionian Islands, his vote in favour of the Reform Bill, and against Lord Hartington's amendment, all seemed to proclaim that Mr. Gladstone had enrolled himself among the regular followers of Lord Derby. And so, no doubt, in his own mind, he had. Had the Government continued in office, Mr. Gladstone, ere long, would have been found upon the Treasury benches. This, we believe, may fairly be regarded as a certainty. And to have led his party through such difficult ground, and through such a variety of great questions, without once giving offence to the lively sensibilities

of Mr. Gladstone, is an achievement which reflects the highest credit on Mr. Disraeli's courtesy of manner and knowledge of mankind.

It cannot be said that either her Majesty or the public were pleased with the success of the Opposition. The testimonials of respect which Lord Derby has received from numerous public bodies, testify to the feelings of the latter, while he was singled out by the Queen for a special mark of favour immediately after his resignation. Nor was the expression of her Majesty's sentiments confined to this act. She refused, in the first instance, to see either Lord John Russell or Lord Palmerston; and it was not till the total incompetency of Lord Granville to form an administration became evident, that her Majesty, with extreme reluctance, consented to send for Lord Palmerston. But even then she was unwilling that the two most important offices in the Cabinet should be shared between the two conspirators. "Lord Clarendon," said her Majesty, "must be Foreign Minister." And when Lord Palmerston repaired to Lord John Russell, according to their previous agreement that whichever was first sent for should command the services of the other, he announced to him, probably not without suppressed glee, that he could offer him any department in the administration but that of Foreign Secretary. "That," replied his lordship, with characteristic promptitude, "is the only one I can accept." And once more was her Majesty coerced by the kindness of the "friends of her youth." It was under these manifestations of feeling from her Majesty that the present Cabinet was constructed; and subsequent events can have done little to modify the

suspicions to which those feelings owed their birth. Lord Palmerston's Government was established to carry a satisfactory Reform Bill, and to preserve our good relations with France. We throw a glance at public affairs, and we see a Reform Bill universally despised, and the *entente cordiale* dissolved.*

On the merits of Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill we need say no more. The crowning merit of that measure was, that it departed from the evil precedent of the first Reform Bill, and sought to make the qualification for the franchise at once less arbitrary and more various. Its object was to give the Conservative feeling of the lower orders a fairer chance, and so to obtain for the Conservative party that parliamentary majority which experience up to that time had shown they were not likely to obtain by other means. Without a Conservative majority, it is impossible to take a bold stand upon Conservative principles. Let us hope that the awakening from sleep which the general Conservatism of the country has recently experienced may result, at no distant date, in awarding that majority to the natural guardians of the Constitution. But if not, let the Conservative party in Parliament no longer be blamed either for their inability to protect our institutions, or for their efforts to enable themselves to do so by any contrivance in their power.

The sum of our remarks is, that we must judge of Mr. Disraeli by his success as the Leader of a Party, and not as a Minister of State; in the latter capacity he has had no

* Written 1860.

opportunity for acquiring a reputation, since the Minister of a minority can never afford to lose sight of party considerations. The exact value to be attached to success in this sphere will, of course, be differently estimated: though the more familiar a man is with the character and history of Parliament, the more highly will he be disposed to rate it. But there is one point about which there cannot be two opinions; and that is, the value which a man's own party ought to place upon it. It may be a slight effort, or a great effort, to bring a drowning man to land; but the individual rescued has no business to think about the matter. We do not mean that there is in our own mind any doubt about the magnitude of the services performed. The Conservative party in 1849 must have become powerless but for Mr. Disraeli; nor were his exertions in their behalf confined to mere personal displays of wit or personal exhortations to courage. He popularised their creed and their language; he taught them that liberality was the attribute of no party, of no sect, and of no rank in life; but an element in the human character perfectly distinct from the profession of particular theories. In practical matters he gradually diverted their energies from a useless struggle to a path in which success was possible: and taught them, instead of grieving over changes which could not be reversed, to demand a compensation which could not in justice be refused. That compensation, the equity of which had been acknowledged by Sir Robert Peel, and was now acknowledged by Mr. Gladstone, they would undoubtedly have obtained, if the distress of the agriculturists

had continued. And this method of mitigating the hardships under which they laboured, as it savoured in no wise of Protection, gradually reclaimed to their ranks the majority of the seceding Conservatives who had become converts to Free Trade. On the question of representation, Mr. Disraeli was the first to bring clearly before the public mind the gross injustice which had been inflicted on the landed interest in 1832, by the proportion in which members had been allotted to the boroughs and the counties. And with the detection of this inequality, he gave his party a *locus standi* in the question of Reform, distinct from the unpopular attitude of simple resistance. Lord John Russell himself, in 1854, acknowledged the validity of the right hon. gentleman's complaint, and made some clumsy efforts to redress the wrong which he had exposed.

We have no hesitation in saying, then, that the services of Mr. Disraeli to the Conservative party have been such as hardly any other living statesman could have performed. His peculiar style of eloquence, admirably adapted for the formularisation of great principles, and his unrivalled powers of wit and sarcasm, were exactly the weapons which his party most required. Having been thoroughly beaten on a point of detail, it was more than ever necessary that they should be able to extricate themselves from the smoke and dust of the conflict, and show that what the Conservative party was before 1846, that for all essential purposes it continued to be afterwards. Being exposed to the incessant jibes of the daily and weekly press, it was peculiarly important that they should have at least one champion

within the walls of Parliament who could repay such attacks with interest? His personal qualifications for his position were, therefore, unrivalled. His policy, we maintain, was only such as every Conservative statesman who aspired to any real influence over public affairs has been more or less obliged to adopt. We mean that no party can aspire to govern this country for any length of time, under the guidance of leaders who belong to its extreme section. The leaders of the Liberals must be more conservative than many of their supporters; and the leaders of the Conservatives more liberal. The whole history of our Parliamentary Government, from the days of the October Club down to the present year, is one long illustration of the fact. We need only to turn to the pages of the *Examiner* to perceive in the reign of Queen Anne an almost exact counterpart of what is occurring in the reign of Queen Victoria. The disastrous effects of trying to govern on extreme principles was clearly exemplified during the four years that succeeded the death of Mr. Canning. And ever since the Reform Bill the attempts of ultra-politicians to force their own views upon the leaders of the party they belonged to, have been perpetual sources of weakness to every successive Government.

Sir Robert Peel however might have led his party on to Free Trade, we are convinced, if he had gone the right way to work. But he owned that he did not trust his party. This shows the character of the man. We are confident he was mistaken. Besides, his reasoning was fallacious, after all. The few supporters who followed him in his repeal of the

Corn Laws in 1846, would have followed him at any time; or at all events quite enough would have followed him to have carried the measure through Parliament. He could but have broken up his party, at the worst; and he could not have broken it up more completely than he did in 1846. It was this cold and suspicious disposition which was the cause of all the mischief, from which we are now suffering. He had no reason in the world to justify his distrust of those loyal and enthusiastic supporters who had stood by him for so many years: and had he appealed in turn to their fidelity, we cannot bring ourselves to doubt that the result would have been far less disastrous. Thus it is that great parties are always broken up. Suspicion creeps in where no suspicion need be. Between pride on the one side and doggedness on the other, the breach is widened; till at length, for no one reason that could stand the test of half an hour's calm discussion, the work of twenty years is undone in a single session.

These are the trials which embitter the career of an English statesman, and are unfortunately of more frequent occurrence than the pleasures we have described in our opening remarks. Mr. Disraeli, however, has as yet been fortunate in having more of the former than the latter. He has long commanded the enthusiasm of four-fifths of his own party, and he has during the last few years attained a high place in public estimation. Nothing could have been more gratifying to the right hon. gentleman's feelings than the tribute of respect recently paid to him by a political opponent, in vindication of his Parliamentary

career.* And certain we are that the judgment of future generations will be conceived in a similar spirit; that they will recognise in the right hon. member for Buckinghamshire a statesman who had profoundly studied the history of the British Constitution, and had arrived at broad views in political philosophy; and a party leader who, if Sir G. C. Lewis be right in his assertion that "all great measures are brought about by party moves," then, as much as any man living, deserves the appellation of greatness.

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* *Daily News*, April 24, 1860.

POLITICAL MEMOIRS.

CHARLES ABBOT, LORD COLCHESTER, AND LORD AUCKLAND.

WE have recently had so copious an effusion from the press of political memoirs and diaries relating to the hundred years which extend backwards from the present day to the accession of George III., that our appetite for the kind of food is necessarily a little sated. Although, however, the political and public interest of such works is inevitably diminished by their frequency; yet the *human* interest attaching to them is ever vivid and engrossing. What our grandfathers thought fair or unfair in their political dealings with each other; round what manner of men the confidence of the nation gathered; what were the relative values of morality and genius in determining a statesman's position—these are inquiries of

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* Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, Speaker of the House of Commons, 1802-1817. Edited by his son Charles, Lord Colchester. In Three Volumes. London: Murray.

The Journal and Correspondence of William Lord Auckland. With a Preface and Introduction by the Right Hon. and Right Rev. the Bishop of Bath and Wells. In Two Volumes. London: Bentley.

which the charm can never fade nor the utility be ever exhausted. The study of constitutional government through the medium of these pages is like the contemplation of bees under a glass hive. We see the secret and intermittent processes by which great events have been matured. And how curiously patriotism and selfishness, a sincere faith in principles and an obstinate love of power, may be united in the same men.

One conviction, we think, will be found to have taken root in almost every man's mind who has gone through a course of such reading with constant reference to the present; and that is, how very much mistaken those persons are who fancy that the bonds of "party" sit lighter upon men now than formerly they did. We will not go so far as to say that the converse is the real truth. But conduct which sixty years ago excited but little condemnation, would not, we think, escape so easily at the present day. We are not now alluding to the North and Fox Coalition. For that unquestionably *did* provoke the British public out of all its customary forbearance. But Lord Grenville's conduct to Mr. Pitt in 1804, and Lord Sidmouth's acceptance of office in the same Cabinet with Fox two years afterwards, are instances, the one of political ingratitude, the other of political laxity, which certainly did not meet with their just share of public condemnation in their own day. It seems to us, therefore, that as the publicity of our Parliamentary procedure has increased, men have become more chary of violating their party obligations rather than less. And if such be the case, what better testimony can we have to the real excellence of our party system?

The *personal* element will always, of course, enter largely into all political combination. Pitt had his "following;" North had his following; Fox had his following; in later times Canning had his following; Sir Robert Peel had his following; and at the present day Mr. Disraeli has *his;* independently in each case of their regular parliamentary supporters, who are concerned only with principles. But this is a kind of influence which should be used with extreme caution. With too little of it a party will lack all the more generous and stimulating elements of political warfare, and run great risk of degenerating into a mere machine. With too much of it they will run an equal risk of forgetting the real ends for which party was instituted, and of merging all other considerations in the triumph of their favourite chief. That Canning's devotion to Pitt led him into this error during the Administration of Mr. Addington is as little to be denied, as that the devotion of certain gentlemen to the late Sir Robert Peel was attended with the same result after 1846. But of Pitt may be said what we fear cannot well be said of Sir Robert—that he discouraged the over-zealous partisanship of his young disciples, and listened without pleasure to the squibs and crackers with which Canning loved to singe the "Doctor." The so-called "connexions," or bands of relatives and dependants who mustered under the banner of some great leading oligarch, were the correlatives of the kind of "following" we speak of. But, unlike the latter, these "connexions" were almost wholly confined to the Whigs, and productive of almost unmixed evil.

Another general reflection suggested by these memoirs

and perhaps the most interesting of all, is this: How slight an influence upon the calculations of statesmen seems in old times to have been exercised by public opinion. The public men of sixty years ago moved in a small circle, with their gaze invariably turned inwards, and seem to have judged of men and events solely by those criteria which passed current in their own sphere, and never by those ruder and broader standards which actuate the vulgar world. Yet the opinion of that vulgar world not unfrequently set at defiance the predictions of the wisest statesmen. And nothing is more remarkable throughout these voluminous memoirs than the contrast which they present between the opinions of the initiated few and the actual issues of affairs. The downfal of ministers, for instance, is constantly predicted, because they were deficient in those qualities which at White's and Brooke's were held to be essential to success—brilliant eloquence, or great connexions, or striking administrative talent. The moral support which a ministry derives from feeling itself in unison with the popular opinion of the day went for nothing in their eyes. Not even the large majorities which these doomed governments regularly obtained in Parliament seem to have affected this prejudice. There were, in fact, in those days, no means of weighing that subtle social force with which we are now so familiar; no machinery by which its essence was distilled, and poured out before the statesman every morning. Public opinion then only found a vent in political meetings or addresses to the Crown. Now it sleeps calmly on the surface of *The Times* newspaper, like the sun upon a pool of clear water, and proclaims to all who can read, what the wisest of our

fathers little knew. It is, of course, not to be forgotten, that public opinion was in those days not merely less perceived, but actually less influential. As it has grown stronger, it has diffused itself more and more widely, and its diffusion has in turn made it stronger. But still it existed in great strength throughout the reign of George III., and many a Whig statesman might have been saved from bitter disappointment, could he only have divined its import.

A third very marked impression created on one by works of this class is of the general trustworthiness of tradition. We see that acquaintance with the private side of a public man's character, while it enables us to fill in particular details, leaves the broad outlines untouched. We are led to reflect how nearly impossible it is that men of this eminence, whose lives and actions have been exposed to the full light of publicity for some thirty or forty years, should be greatly misjudged by their contemporaries. And though, of course, the further we dive into the past the less confident can we feel that historical statements are not individual prejudices, yet it is comfortable to remember that, where we have the means of judging, we see that those characters of men which have finally been adopted by historians are substantially the true ones; subject of course to those obvious allowances for the personal prejudice of the writer which every man can make for himself.

It is to be observed, however, that unless edited with extreme care, the journals, letters, and miscellaneous remains of public men are sure to represent so much of personal prepossessions as greatly to impair their value

for historical purposes. The first idea which occurs to the mind of any man interested in such subjects, on seeing or hearing of a fresh issue of family papers, is, that now at length we shall have the true history of some hitherto mysterious transactions; that we shall be admitted behind the scenes, and see the actors in great events with their stage costume thrown aside. Well, we do see all this; but in proportion to the freedom with which transactions are discussed and motives acknowledged in such documents, is the openness with which personal prejudices are indulged and political enemies defamed. Thus what we gain on one side we are in danger of losing on the other. We are certainly admitted to disclosures which could never have been made in Parliament; but we are also distracted by interruptions which greatly obscure their moral lesson. The saints of old are said to have suffered from the malignity of demons, who would interpose themselves between the pages of a good book and the eyes of a devout reader, leading away his thoughts to unholy objects, and making the words of truth and wisdom unintelligible. The reader of political memoirs is tormented in the same fashion by the demons of spite and partiality, which flit before his eyes like bats, as he labours to extract the truth from some long and confidential narrative. The value, therefore, of a really honest and really competent editor for works of this description may be easily understood. But it seems very difficult to procure one. The task is often done by relations; and the relations of a distinguished man are prone to adopt all his views, and defend all his fancies with little or no examination. The Diary now before us is not entirely free from these defects, bearing chiefly on the characters of

Lord Eldon and Mr. Canning. To explain what we mean, we quote a few lines, dated October, 1804:

> In March last the Chancellor had a *tête-à-tête* dinner with Mr. Pitt, of which he acquainted Mr. Addington a month afterwards; and after Mr. Addington had resolved upon his own resignation in order to give the King a freer choice of a Ministry, the Chancellor delivered to the King a letter from Mr. Pitt, in which there were expressions injurious to Mr. Addington. Against this proceeding, Mr. Addington remonstrated with the Chancellor on the night before the new Ministry was formed, and told him at a Cabinet meeting that to have done so was unpardonable.

What the editor should have here added is, that the Chancellor did not present the letter to the King until after he had been requested by the King, at *Mr. Addington's own suggestion*, to ascertain the views of Mr. Pitt. When Mr. Pitt communicated these views to Lord Eldon for transmission to the King, was he to refuse to deliver them because they were unfavourable to Mr. Addington? The supposition is absurd. Pitt's letter is, perhaps, too strongly worded, but that was no fault of Lord Eldon.

Other comparatively trifling instances may be adduced, to show that Lord Colchester has not consulted quite as carefully as he ought to have done the contemporary memoirs of the time. At page 100, for instance, of the same volume, he prints some strong expressions employed by Lord Sidmouth against Canning immediately before the resignation of the Grenville Ministry; but he has failed to notice that in a letter written by Lord Eldon to his brother, only one fortnight later, it is stated that the whole body of Pittites had resolved to support Mr. Canning in the difference between him and Lord Sidmouth. Lord

Eldon is not a very willing witness, so that the assertion is probably quite true; while the fact shows that there was a large number of able and honourable men who entertained a view of Mr. Canning's conduct vastly different from Lord Sidmouth's.

The author of this Diary himself, though not without strong political sympathies, was early removed from active participation in the battle. And his duties as Speaker trained him to a habit of impartiality, of which we frequently discern the benefit. Sitting in the Speaker's chair, between the fiery spirits then ranged upon each side of him, he must have received the highest kind of parliamentary education which it is possible for public life to impart. Yet, after all, whether it were from innate disinclination for political affairs, or simply from the well-known circumstance that those who stand nearest often see the least, we cannot tell; but Lord Colchester's reminiscences are not as abundant in interesting matter as we should have anticipated. Probably there is truth in both explanations of the fact. Lord Colchester had early imbibed literary tastes; and he had early manifested a preference for a comparatively obscure certainty to the chance of a more brilliant eminence. The son of a west-country clergyman of ancient lineage, he was a pupil of the classic Markham at Westminster, whose verses shine out in the "Carmina Quadragesimalia," like the moon among the lesser fires. At Westminster he got his election, and at Christ Church he got the Latin verse; no avenue to distinction being at that time open to members of the University except the Chancellor's prizes. In those days "all its original brightness" had not yet de-

parted from an Oxford prize poem; and young Abbot's "Petrus Magnus" was honoured with the special recognition of the Empress of Russia, who sent the young poet one of the gold medals "struck by her command upon the peace with the Turks." Sixty years sooner this distinction alone would have placed the lucky student in the high road to political preferment. However, though he did not attain to the distinction of a Prior or an Addison, he cannot be said to have done amiss. In 1783 he was called to the bar; and during his first ten years he averaged 1500*l.* a year. Yet so slight seems to have been his confidence in his own ability, that on the first opportunity he exchanged his chances for a compromise, and became Clerk of the Rules in the court of King's Bench at a salary of 2700*l.* a year. The same principle guided him in his political career. In 1795 he entered Parliament as the nominee of the Duke of Leeds. He immediately devoted himself to objects of great utility rather than of thrilling interest. While the wars of the Titans were rolling around him, we find the future Speaker intent upon Dockyard Committees, Forfeiture Bills, Expiring Act Bills, and the like. All honour to such men! They are the true type of the solid Anglo-Norman gentleman—the Angle with his steady work, the Norman with his ineradicable nonchalance. If ever any man heard "the mighty crack" unmoved, it was Abbot. And he reaped his reward. For such men Speakerships and Chairmanships were created, and nature would have been violated had not Abbot stepped into the very first practicable vacancy; to which, indeed, his friends had unanimously destined him from his first entry into public life.

It would be unfair to him, however, to conceal the fact that so high an opinion was entertained of his talents, that he more than once had much higher offers made to him. Both Addington and Perceval would have given him a leading Cabinet position, would he have consented to quit the *otium cum dignitate* in which he had ensconced himself. But Abbot was not, as it seems, that sort of person. His ideas of literary leisure, indeed, appear to have early faded into air. He was essentially a working man to the last. But he seems to have liked his work and his holiday, the one undisturbed by the other; and, if we may hazard a conjecture, he seems early to have determined that he would enjoy life, and would not sacrifice the real good of that to any visions of future grandeur, or to realities of heartache, headache, and indigestion. He clung, accordingly, to the Speakership till his health became inadequate to the labour. He then exchanged his position for the dignified tranquillity of the Upper House, with the title of Lord Colchester and a pension of 4000*l.* a year. He took advantage of this change in his estate to visit foreign countries, especially Italy; and we have a vast amount of these volumes filled up with the "Municipal Government of Genoa"—a sort of subject in which the ex-Speaker would luxuriate. Returning to England, he joined the extreme Tory party in the House of Lords; voted against everything that was proposed; and had the honour of dying as he had lived, a staunch defender of the old eighteenth-century Constitution.

Lord Auckland, as also Lord Colchester, seems to have belonged to that class of men whom one imagines must

have been more numerous under the ancient régime than the modern, — those, namely, who take to politics as a profession, and have consequently the strongest inducement to stand well with all parties. It is indeed greatly to the honour of this class of men that they have, as a rule, resisted the temptation to which such a position exposes them, and that fewer instances of tergiversation are to be found among them than among their less dependent brethren. Men, it would appear, succumb more readily to the cravings of vanity than to the prospects of indigence. But Lord Auckland entered political life under bad auspices. His oracle and confidant was Mr. Wedderburne, a man perhaps naturally impervious, rather than deliberately disobedient, to the voice of political morality, but who was not on that account the safer counsellor for a young and fortuneless politician. The pair hunted in couples, more or less closely, during the whole of Lord Auckland's public life, and shared the merit of various political exploits, which, however we divide the responsibility, still leave no inconsiderable weight on the shoulders of the diplomatist.

Lord Loughborough, with many good points in his disposition—such, for instance, as his kindliness towards men of letters—had very little sensibility to common scruples. It is said that, when a barrister, he used to solicit business from the City aldermen. Old Sheridan, who taught him elocution, complained of his ingratitude. Lord Campbell says that the effect of his oratory was spoiled by his reputation for insincerity. He began his political career under Lord Bute. On the downfal of that Minister he became a

flaming patriot. When that occupation was exhausted, he again became a pillar of Toryism under Lord North. In 1782, he suggested a coalition which struck at the very root of Tory principles. And at a much later period he again intrigued against Pitt with equal selfishness, but more duplicity, inasmuch as he then sat upon the woolsack, with which his support had been purchased after the disgrace of Lord Thurlow.

Taking counsel with such a man as this upon the political crisis which followed the death of Lord Rockingham, it was inevitable that Mr. Eden's moral eyesight should to some extent be darkened. A much younger man than the Chief Justice, and accustomed to ask his advice from his first entry into politics, he allowed his own natural shrewdness to be employed by the ambitious lawyer. Both together brought the full weight of their influence to bear on Lord North, and prevent his junction with Lord Shelburne. The unprincipled character of the policy which they forced upon him was at once recognised by the public, even though we were willing to believe it was not recognised by themselves. Nor will it more contrary to principle, than it was to the interests of the public. Such a Ministry as was capable of being formed by the junction of North and Shelburne would have anticipated the Government of Pitt; and having the advantage of Lord Shelburne's knowledge of foreign affairs, would probably have avoided some of those blunders which even Pitt's best friends do not deny that he committed. Lord Loughborough would have got just as much in such a contingency as he got from the event which he promoted. For Thurlow remained Chancellor throughout. That such

a Ministry was not formed either in 1782 or 1783 was the work of these two gentlemen. And to have prevented its formation, were their motives as pure as driven snow, is a blot on their political wisdom and a detraction from their public deserts which no other services can obliterate.

The above, then, is one passage of Mr. Eden's career which gave rise to that unfavourable estimate of his character against which the Bishop now protests, though without doing anything to change our previous construction of it. This passage it was which caused George III. to speak of Lord Auckland as an "eternal intriguer." But the favour which he lost by one piece of intrigue he regained nearly twenty years afterwards by another. Mr. Pitt always blamed himself for having presented the subject of Roman Catholic Emancipation to his Majesty without sufficient preparation. But it appears that what Mr. Pitt neglected to do for himself others had begun to do for him. In 1800, Lord Loughborough writes to Lord Auckland that he ought to give a hint to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject. The King must be put upon his guard against the meditated treachery of his Minister. The Protestant zeal of the Chief Justice could not contain itself when he saw the blow that was levelled at his religion. Truth was greater than friendship; and his duty lay clear before him. So, despising the probable misconstructions of his enemies, he begged Lord Auckland to interfere. His lordship, evidently nothing loth, undertook the task. He wrote to the Primate; the Primate spoke to the King; the King spoke to Mr. Pitt; and in the course of a few months the public was astonished at the news that

Mr. Addington was Premier. But the beauty of the whole story is, that nobody professed so much astonishment as Lord Auckland. He complained to Mr. Pitt that he had been unfairly treated in not being apprised of his intentions. The ex-minister replied briefly that Lord Auckland knew best which of them had most reason to complain of the unfairness of the other. But, not satisfied with making these statements in private, and pouring out his grievances to George Rose, he had the uncommon effrontery to stand up in the House of Lords and declare that Pitt's resignation was a mystery, and must arise from some hidden motive of which the public was not to be informed. This was too much even for Rose. The following morning he wrote to Lord Auckland, declining for the future the honour of his acquaintance. The authorities for this story are Lord Malmesbury's "Diary and Correspondence," published in 1844, and Sir George Rose's "Diary and Correspondence," published in 1859. Lord Campbell adopts the story, and the present editor makes no attempt at refuting it. He only says that he thinks it will be refuted if anybody ever writes the life of Lord Auckland with impartiality. But we certainly cannot understand why the present volumes stop short where they do—*i.e.* in 1793, when such very important circumstances in his lordship's political career remained to be explained.

It is far more agreeable to contemplate Lord Auckland in private life and in the centre of his family circle. The journal which he kept during his residence in Spain is most entertaining, and exhibits him to the reader in a very agreeable light. His description of the country, the people, and the inns are most graphic and picturesque, and the

King and his shooting-parties are described with great humour and felicity. Here his acuteness and talent for working in the dark, which led him astray in England, were well matched against the politicians of the country, and were highly serviceable to the British Government. This portion of the work we have read with unmixed pleasure, and can confidently recommend to the public, as giving a better idea of the general appearance of Spain before the Revolution than any other book we are acquainted with.

Lord Auckland, too, was very fortunate in his correspondents. Among others, Mr. Storer writes with an ease and piquancy which we scarcely find in Horace Walpole, and with a command of fashionable and literary gossip which enables him to do justice to his style. Storer himself was a famous kind of man in his day—something of the "Beauclerc stamp, but with more good nature and fun. He used to be called the Admirable Crichton of the period. He did everything, and in almost everything he did he excelled. He was a first-rate classical scholar, a collector of books and prints, had a fine taste in art, and was an adept at the same time in all manly exercises—especially in skating. He led a lounging literary club-life, on a fortune of 8000*l.* a-year, and died a bachelor in 1799. The only thing we don't like about him is his constant depreciation of Burke. He calls him "that Irishman," and sneers at the "Reflections on the French Revolution," not as a political but as a literary production. But for all this his letters are delightful. The last bit of Court scandal, the last St. James's-street witticism, the last elopement, the newest rumour of a marriage, and the latest announcement of a birth, are all chronicled for the

edification of his friend and Mrs. Eden, whose taste for this sort of news seems to have been a recognised joke with her acquaintances. In one of his letters we have a very funny description of Brighton; October, 1788:

It seemed as if all the gayest and the prettiest women in England, of a certain class, had come to market on the Steyne. Authorised by the royal example, everybody thought himself at liberty to do as the Prince himself did; and every votary at Mrs. Weston's court thought herself as good, in some respects, as the lady who seemed to hold the first rank in the place. It was curious to observe at the play-house the climax of immorality, from the lowest to the first range round the boxes. But nothing was so singular here as to see our friend Lord Brudenell, in so new a point of view. He was living with all these fair nymphs, in the easiest manner. How far his virtue was in danger I will not pretend to say, but if Cato could not trust himself at Baiæ, I should think his Lordship runs some risk at Brightelmstone. He is now no longer called "His Honour," but the familiar appellation of "Cockie" is substituted in its stead. It is said a great personage is prodigiously amused with this new cognomen, which the keeper of his privy purse has acquired.

It strikes us that "a certain great personage" must have been very easily diverted. But perhaps there was something in the designation of "Cockie" which only contemporaries could appreciate.

Storer's letters are gemmed with neat little classical allusions, always grateful to the busy man of the world if he happen to be an English gentleman. On the King's vigorous policy immediately after the recovery of his reason, he quotes from Martial, *si non errasset fecerat illa minus.* And when he teases his friend at the Hague to send him some Dutch prints, he likens himself to Cœlius plaguing Cicero in Cilicia to send him some panthers.

Another correspondent of Lord Auckland who writes

very pleasantly was Holroyd, Lord Sheffield, the editor of Gibbon, though he seems to have been "a vile Whig." But one of the most charming letters in the whole collection is from one of the Miss Norths to Mrs. Eden, which shows that the fair writer had inherited all her father's pleasantry. "My dearest Nell," it begins, and after thanking that lady for some beautiful pink gauze which she had sent, proceeds to reward her with the following:

Last Monday morning I went to Kensington Gardens, and every person I met attacked me with, "Have you heard of the duel?"—"Oh dear no! Do tell me all about it. Where was it? Who was it between? What was it about?"—"Between Mr. F—— and Jack L——, this morning in Hyde Park, about Mrs. F——; you know they have been going on shamefully a great while."—"Not I, indeed! They have flirted certainly, too much, but many more shameful flirtations are about."—"Oh! that there are, certainly, witness Lady B—— and Mr. W——, Lady T—— and Mr. B——, etc. etc. etc. etc.; but this was very bad, indeed, and I make no doubt Mr. F—— has made very serious discoveries."—"Then you are not sure that he has?" "No; but nothing less could justify a duel; depend upon it they were caught." But, however, it certainly is not so; for, upon further inquiry, I find Mr. F—— has not the smallest ground to believe himself actually in the *happiest state in the world*, but for some time has been uneasy at Jack's attention to his wife, and ordered her not to speak to him; but she had too much *spirit* to be governed by a husband, and I believe talked the more to him to show that she had. Some d—— good-natured friend (who is always at hand upon such occasions) wrote anonymous letters to Mr. F—— telling him all that happened, and a great deal more, till he was worked up to a most violent fury, and, one night, insisted upon her not going to Ranelagh, when she was engaged. But to be kept at home to please a surly husband was too much. She would go; and go she did.

The issue of this affair, told also by Storer, was a duel, which did no harm except to the lady's reputation, which it naturally ruined for ever.

It has been said of many statesmen that they were seen to most advantage in private life:

> ——in the happier hour
> Of social pleasure, ill exchanged for power.

And certainly Lord Auckland is one of them. But in the diaries and correspondence which constitutes political memoirs in general, we see them neither in private life nor public. We see a mixture of the two. We see public affairs under the process of private arrangement; and it is just at such a time that the personalities of public life, the selfishness, the rivalries, and the malice rise to the surface, while nobler and deeper springs of action disappear from view. We must not, therefore, accept the general level of sentiment maintained in these papers for the *whole* of any man's way of thinking upon state transactions. We must be careful also of mistaking the style in which grave subjects are occasionally discussed for real levity or indifference to the public interests. Partly, perhaps, owing to the simplicity of the English character, and our tendency to keep our strongest emotions out of sight, we often find the tone which is proper to a man's private and domestic concerns imported into the discussion of political principles. Finally, there is the exactly opposite danger to be guarded against—that, namely, of imputing to affectation or insincerity the use of a loftier phraseology than common, which by men long accustomed to address Parliament on great questions may often be employed with unconsciousness.

PARTY.*

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It is now almost exactly one hundred and fifty years ago since the great literary advocate of the then Whig party wrote as follows:

In cases of this nature, it is the duty of an honest and prudent man to sacrifice a doubtful opinion to the concurrent judgment of those whom he believes to be well-intentioned to their country, and who have better opportunities of looking into all its most complicated interests. An honest party of men, acting with unanimity, are of infinitely greater consequence than the same party aiming at the same end by different views: as a large diamond is of a thousand times greater value whilst it remains entire than when it is cut into a multitude of smaller stones, notwithstanding they may, each of them, be very curiously set, and are of the same water.

Rather more than sixty years after these words were written, another and a greater than Addison, and likewise the chief literary ornament of the same party, expressed himself thus:

Party is a body of men united for promoting, by their joint endea-

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* A Tory's Account of Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism. De Quincey. Vol. xv.

The Political Parties of Modern England. Ibid.

May's Constitutional History of England. Vol. ii. chap. i.

vours, the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. For my part, I find it impossible to conceive that any one believes in his own politics, or thinks them to be of any weight, who refuses to adopt the means of having them reduced into practice. It is the business of a speculative philosopher to mark the proper ends of government. It is the business of the politician, who is the philosopher in action, to find out proper means towards those ends and to employ them with effect. Therefore, every honourable connexion will avow it is their first purpose to pursue every just method to put the men who hold their opinions into such a condition as may enable them to carry their common plans into execution, with all the power and authority of the State. As this power is attached to certain situations, it is their duty to contend for those situations. . . . . If an individual does not concur in these general principles upon which the party is founded, and which necessarily draw on a concurrence in their application, he ought from the beginning to have chosen some others more conformable to his opinions. When the question is in its nature doubtful, or not very material, the modesty which becomes an individual, and (in spite of our court moralists) that partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship, will frequently bring on an acquiescence in the general sentiment. Thus, the disagreement will naturally be rare; it will only be enough to indulge freedom, without violating concord or disturbing arrangement. And this is all that ever was required for a character of the greatest uniformity and steadiness in connexion. How men can proceed without any connexion at all, is to me utterly incomprehensible.

Again, after the lapse of near a century, a statesman whom many persons, probably, would place upon a level with Burke, spoke thus decisively in defence of the vote of want of confidence proposed by the Whig party in 1859:

I fully admit that this motion is a party move . . . . but I must be permitted to remark that all great questions in this House have been decided by party moves. A parliamentary system can only be conducted by the combined operation of parties. If we look back to former times we shall find that all great questions—the Reform Bill of 1832, Catholic Emancipation, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws—were dealt with in the way of party moves; and whatever amelioration is to be

expected in our present state must, according to the constitution of the House of Commons, proceed from the same sources.—*Speech of Sir G. C. Lewis, June* 10, 1859.

This triple testimony in favour of the system of party borne by three such men, delivered at such intervals of time, and in the light of such various and ample experience, ought surely to convince us that the affected superiority to party ties, of which it is not uncommon at the present day to hear men boast, is in reality no sign of intellectual vigour; and that it is oftener claimed by those whose minds are too effeminate to comprehend the true value of the system, than by men who are really so exalted as to be unable to stoop to such distinctions.

De Quincey, writing in the years 1835 and 1837, in answer to the supposed inquiry of a friend as to what view a Tory then took of the position of parties in the State, laid down that this was little if at all affected by recent changes; the Tory remaining then, as ever, the custodian of the "timocratic" elements of the Constitution, and the Whig of the popular or democratic element. The practical object of the paper was to show that when any of the adherents of either side run into dangerous excesses, it is the duty of the main body to forswear them, and to join for a time with their opponents in resisting the common foe. This, he said, was what the Whigs did in 1792, and he might have added, that it was what the Tories did in 1688; and he contended that it was the duty of the Whig party, after the Reform Bill, to have imitated this behaviour as soon as it became evident that their new Radical allies were for going to extremities never before contemplated as being

within the Whig programme. He also drew a just and very useful distinction between a party regarded as the depository of a particular political principle, and as the advocate or opponent of particular measures arising out of its position at the moment as the supporters or the antagonists of Government. The one, of course, may naturally flow out of the other; but they do not always, or, indeed, generally do so; and hence one source of popular confusion on the subject, which, though Mr. De Quincey has not been the only one to notice it, has never been explained with as much clearness and publicity as its importance requires.

The above paragraph pretty well exhausts the chief points of these two interesting tracts, of which the one has never been before printed, and the other we suspect is but little known to the present generation. The extent to which we either agree with or differ from the conclusions therein indicated, will show itself in the course of our remarks. At present, we confine ourselves to offering a few observations upon the primary distinction of all here drawn between Whigs and Tories. In answer to the question, as propounded in 1835, a question, however, that could only be asked by a rather shallow thinker, whether Whigs or Tories are "in the right," De Quincey's view is logical and ample. *Both* are in the right: each being entrusted with the guardianship of distinct parts of the Constitution, which both venerate as a whole. But it is manifest that a particular party can only be defined as the protector of the "timocratic" side of the Constitution, while the elements of the timocracy are united among themselves, and constitute one interest. It is remarkable, however, that such a state

of things as this is the exception, not the rule, in England. When it does occur, the combination is irresistible. With the Crown, and a large majority of *both* the aristocracy and the clergy upon the same side, a contest is almost hopeless.* Such a union did exist, no doubt, during half the reign of George III., and during the reign of his successor; and this posture of affairs being nearest in order of time to the men of 1835, was naturally assumed to be the normal one. But it has existed only very partially since the termination of the period we have assigned to it, and before its commencement had scarcely existed at all. The Church and the Crown had been united against the aristocracy. The aristocracy and the Church had been united against the Crown. But all three together had never, before the French Revolution, stood on the defensive together against the extension of popular rights, or the concession of religious freedom. De Quincey's distinction, therefore, between Whig and Tory is too broad if intended to apply to any but a very narrow period of time. Timocracy is a comprehensive creed, and will hold other fish besides Tories. Its meshes are large enough to hold even "that leviathan," who, in Burke's language, "wallowed in the fat of Bedford level." The distinction between Whigs and Tories during the latter stage of their existence in a vital form is, doubtless, the legitimate parent from whose loins sprang the modern distinction between Radical and Conservative, which obviously corresponds more nearly with

* Cf. Burke's letter to Fox of 1777, quoted by Mr. May, vol. ii. p. 17.

De Quincey's definition. But there are earlier and more clearly-marked distinctions between the two, the more remarkable of which De Quincey has only overlooked because his eyes were fixed upon the phenomena of the passing moment, and the exigencies of a special crisis. Mr. May seems once or twice to have caught sight of it, as where, at page 7, he dissents from a marvellous statement of Mr. Wingrove Cooke's, to the effect that, "after Bolingbroke renounced the Jacobite cause, on the accession of George II., we never henceforth find the Tory party struggling to extend the prerogative of the Crown,"—a rare combination of errors in a single sentence—but it eludes his vision again directly; and he has actually quoted, as if he believed in the statement of the same writer, that "Toryism is only a creed for rulers." We might as well say that a windmill was good only for millers, or that steam-engines were good only for stokers.

It does not appear to us then, that the parties of Whig and Tory, as they existed down to 1832, were formed *by* the Revolution of 1688, though they sprang into being soon *after* it. Had the Tories, as a body, disapproved of that settlement, then as far as that settlement was an extension of popular rights, so far might Whigs and Tories have been held to occupy the positions assigned to them by De Quincey. But this was not so. The Tories, always, be it remembered, a distinct body from the Jacobites, concurred in the Revolution; and they concurred in it because they discovered by experience that the evils which the Whigs had predicted, should a Papist succeed to the Throne, had really come to pass. As long as these were remote and

uncertain—that is, in the reign of Charles II.—they held that to break the line of descent, and to incur all the dangers of a disputed succession, was the greater evil of the two. Nor were these dangers one whit more visionary than those predicted by the Whigs. Of the means by which it was found necessary to protect the Hanoverian dynasty, the less that is said the better. But still it was wisely determined that nothing could be ultimately so bad for this empire as the perpetuation of the old Caroline monarchy in the person of a Papist. Whigs and Tories consented to forget their differences to avert this common danger, and the acceptance of William III. was a tacit acknowledgment on the part of the Tories that the weight of evidence had now turned against them.

To some extent, therefore, Bolingbroke is right in saying that parties expired at the Revolution—but not altogether; while he is totally wrong in ignoring their subsequent resurrection. The system inaugurated at the Revolution did not settle down into fair working order until after the accession of George I. During this interval the Tories still clung to the hope that even now perhaps the interruption of the direct line of descent might turn out to be a temporary expedient, and that all the practical objects of the Revolution might still be secured under a Prince of the House of Stuart. Thus the distinction between Whig and Tory, from 1688 to 1714, was only a modified form of the distinction which created them at first. The Tories under William III., indeed, were not a court party, as they had been under Charles II. They called themselves, in fact, the country party. But, as far as they gave their support

to that prince at all, they did it on monarchical principles; and during the latter part of Queen Anne's reign, they had absolutely returned to the position which had distinguished them thirty years before: the preference, that is, of the legitimate heir at all hazards, to the perils of a disputed succession. The Whigs, on the other hand, remained firm to their old principles; so that, in our judgment, it is from 1714 rather than from 1688 that the lapse of one set of relations between Whig and Tory, and the birth of a new one, is properly to be dated. We are all of us accustomed to talk of the Revolution of 1688; but we too frequently forget that it was a drama in two parts, of which the succession of the House of Hanover was the second and completing act. Till this event took place, it was still uncertain whether the old *régime* had been finally superseded or not; and political parties, accordingly, still retained numerous traces of their ancient character. But with the firm establishment of parliamentary government they took a new shape. The Jacobites, of course, still clung to the skirts of the Tories; but the majority of these, giving up, in every practical sense at least, the cause of the Chevalier, betook themselves to exposing those abuses which the exigencies of a disputed title had entailed upon Government, and thus earning for themselves the credit of being "patriot," at about the same price which is usually paid for that honour.

Thus, the strife of parties, from the Restoration to the final decease of the Stuart dynasty, lulled for a time by the necessity of showing an unbroken front to James II., had

gathered virtually round the same point: the possibility, that was, of maintaining civil and religious liberty without interrupting the succession. The great value placed by English statesmen upon the maintenance of hereditary right had been shown in the case of Queen Mary, and was a legacy from the wars of the Roses. The Tory party—and here, of course, it is needless to say we are speaking of the good men of both parties, men who really thought and felt upon the subject, and not of time-servers and adventurers—the Tory party strove hard to save that principle. The Whigs, caring less about this, strove hard to make sure of the liberties which had come to us in 1688. Herein, down to the death of Queen Anne, lay the fundamental difference between the two parties. Neither were labouring for ends undeserving of approval. The purpose of the Tories was in the abstract quite right. The policy of the Whigs has been justified by the best of all justifications—the event. Had James III. been like his ancestor, Henry IV., the fulfilment of the Tory scheme would have been to be desired. But we now know that both the son and the grandson of James II., unfit as they were to reign over England at any time, were peculiarly unfit for the part they would then have had to play. This, perhaps, was not so fully understood then as it has been since. But to determine the exact deductions which ought to be made on that account from the credit of the Whig party is a refinement to which history cannot stoop.

From 1714 to the end of the eighteenth century forms another epoch in the history of party, which requires to be

separately treated. It was now, as we have just observed, that the Tories began to arrogate to themselves the title of patriots; and with the commencement of this period those ideas began to sprout, which formed in their maturity the essential doctrine of Toryism for more than half a century. This, then, is the second phase of party antagonism in Great Britain, as that included within the terms of De Quincey's definition is the third. We can easily imagine the discomfited party which lost everything by the accession of George I., standing, as it were, with their hands in their pockets, and inquiring of their successful adversaries, "Well, gentlemen, and what are you going to do for us *now?*" As time went on, and what they were going to do became apparent, the Tories would begin to say that we didn't seem to have gained so very much. The better principle which was working invisibly underneath the system of Sir Robert Walpole they could not see. In other respects, all external phenomena were unfavourable to the new order of things: a growing debt, a large standing army, increased taxation, organised bribery, a timid peace, and a disastrous war. "Zounds!" would cry the country gentlemen, slapping their thighs in triumph, "Charles II.'s men had not been so very far wrong. These were the evils which the old Tories had foreseen. The Minister *had* become 'a perpetual dictator.' A prince to whom the old English loyalty might again attach itself was, at all events, better than this." Now, as it never entered into the head of either party in those days that the abuses which then disfigured parliamentary government could be remedied from below, the inevitable conclusion of those who desired, for

any reason whatever, to see them cured, was, that they must be dealt with from above. Hence it grew to be the creed of the Tory party that the Augean stable, which the House of Commons appeared to have become, must be cleansed and purified by a vigorous assertion of prerogative. Eighty years afterwards an analogous result was sought for by a large infusion of democracy. In each case it is possible that the Reformers went too far; yet in each case the means adopted seem to have been appropriate to the age. George III., no doubt for a very brief period, turned the weapons of the Whigs against themselves, and bribed as extensively as Walpole; but when he had once broken the neck of the Whig domination, he had no further need of such instruments, and this particular evil was thus, at all events, put down. That this result was only purchased at a high price may or may not be quite true; but if it was, it only in this respect resembles most other great political results. The Reformation was bought at a great price; the Revolution was bought at a great price; and the Reform Bill was bought at a very great price indeed.

Of this, however, more presently. An amusing political satire might, no doubt, be written upon the Tory party in the reign of George II. "The Tories in search of a King" is an image which has already suggested many strokes of ridicule to their opponents. At first they floundered about sadly. Frederick Prince of Wales was a queer kind of patriot King; but when at length their visionary and romantic notions came in contact with the strong, if narrow, sense and resolute will of George III., they found exactly what they wanted, and the union was at once

fertile. Now, for the first thirty years of this King's reign, that continued to be the differential doctrine of Toryism, which had been so in a cruder form for the thirty years immediately preceding it; the maintenance, namely, of the royal prerogative at the same pitch at which the Bill of Rights had left it; while the cardinal doctrine of the Whigs continued to be, on the other hand, the simple contradiction of this. The one party held that the King's will must be respected, even when adverse to a majority of the House of Commons: that the Ministers were his servants, and that the fact of their disagreeing with him upon any important point of policy did not necessarily involve their resignation of office. *His* will they held to be part of the Government of the country as much as the will of either House of Parliament, and entitled to its own peculiar mode of expression. Against this, which was undoubtedly true enough in theory, the Whigs set the unbroken practice of more than fifty years, by which it had come to be assumed that a King of England was "to reign, but not govern;" and that the great patrician families were his recognised assessors on the throne. It was not till much later, not, that is, till the very eve of the French Revolution, that this clearly cut distinction between the two parties became complicated with others, which have ever since tended to obscure their true history.* The grand distinction between Whig and Tory in the eighteenth century lay in their respective *methods*. After this time it became entangled with their respective measures. When,

* Cf. Sir G. C. Lewis. Dialogue on the Best Form of Government.

therefore, Lord Macaulay says that from 1783 to 1790, or thereabouts, Mr. Pitt was a good Whig, he is guilty of an anachronism, which he would have been the first to detect in an opponent. The measures on which he relies in support of this assertion had not then been appropriated by either party in the State. It is, strictly speaking, truer to say that the Whigs in after years were good Tories, than that the Tories long before were good Whigs. Mr. Pitt's party title had been stamped upon him before he commenced legislation. His acceptance of office as the King's servant in 1783, and the maintenance of his place in the teeth of an overpowering majority throughout the winter, was Pitt's profession of faith. And to this creed he continued firm through life.

We fix the termination of this second phase of party antagonism about the year 1790, because, with the outbreak of the French Revolution, no doubt, the seeds were sown of that horror of all change which became mixed up with it at a later epoch; though during the lifetime of Pitt, and, indeed, for some years afterwards, this spirit was only in its infancy. Toryism, however, in this guise, is only another name for Conservatism, and therefore it is that we have dwelt at length upon the aspects and operation of this famous creed while it yet existed in its integrity. It passes, as we have seen, through two distinct phases before its waters mingle finally with the broad current of general Conservatism, in which its more striking peculiarities are merged and lost. The first of these extends from the middle of the reign of Charles II. to the completion of the English Revolution in 1714: the second, from the ac-

cession of George I. to the beginning of the French Revolution in 1790. The comparative merits of the two great parties throughout the whole period, it would be foreign to our present purpose to endeavour to appraise. We only wish to point out this, that during this same period both parties must be judged upon first principles of government. If the Whig principle was right, it could not be made wrong by the bribery of Sir Robert Walpole or the misfortunes of Admiral Hosier. If the Tory principle was right, it could not be made wrong by the prosecution of the American war or the refusal of Romish emancipation. In either case, these were accidents and not essentials; and, indeed, it is only fair to George III. to ask, what, if the American war had been successful, would have been the verdict of posterity on its justice? Yet it is admitted by military men that had a Clive, a Wolfe, or an Abercromby commanded our troops at the outset, the colonies must certainly have succumbed. However, what we mean is, that it was not what was done, so much as how it was done, which in those days distinguished the one creed from the other. George III. would have been just as much a Tory in promoting as in resisting the repeal of the Roman Catholic disabilities had he striven to attain this end by the exercise of personal authority. It must not however be forgotten that his individual conduct, when blameworthy, is of course an indirect impugnment of the Tory theory. For the case against absolute monarchy being partially founded upon the improbability of obtaining a sufficient number of wise monarchs, any additional instance of a mistaken or impolitic ruler strengthens it by so much. And

though, of course, *absolute* monarchy was very far from the intention of the Tories, yet just so far as the prerogative which they did favour advanced in that direction does this argument affect them.

We now pass on to the last or mixed phase of the old party opposition, in which the primary idea of "prerogative" became wedded to the secondary idea of the maintenance of existing institutions. Between the two there was no logical connexion. The great Conservative majority which the French Revolution had called into being, made use of a Tory ministry to carry out their wishes. But the two creeds—the genuine Toryism of the eighteenth century, and the Conservative Toryism of a later era—still existed in quiet distinct shapes alongside as it were of each other down almost to the date of the Reform Bill. Even so late as the time of Mr. Canning's ministry, the old Tory principle continued to reassert itself. And in the latest volume of that long series of political memoirs which have been published by the family of Grenville, we find proofs that George IV. still aspired to sustain the part so long acted by his father, and that he had ministers about him who strove to humour his ambition. But, on the whole, it was the newer aspect of Toryism which, after 1815 at all events, impressed itself on the public mind. And the new aspect which Whiggism assumed to accommodate itself to the changed position of its antagonist is likewise that with which we are all of us most familiar. When the stirring times which preceded the peace of 1815 had created a strong Conservative party in the country, and when the proof given by the Prince Regent that he meant

to continue the old party in power, had finally determined the Whigs to put no more faith in princes, but to throw themselves on the people to recruit their shattered fortunes, Tory and Whig began to confront each other upon a very different footing from anything which had formerly distinguished them. The Tory gradually became the staunch champion of everything good, bad, or indifferent, which existed in the British constitution; and by so doing, he of course gave a vantage ground to the Whigs, of which they did not fail to make the most. The Whigs, on the other hand, departing from their old position of simple hostility to prerogative, devoted themselves steadily to the redress of glaring anomalies and antiquated laws, and by so doing, established a contrast so favourable to themselves, that they have ever since lived upon the fame of it. Notwithstanding the numerous abuses, the redress of which had been thrown over by the great war upon the shoulders of a younger generation, there is in the pure action of party during this period (1815—1830) something very healthy and attractive. The secret of it is, that in those days each side was thoroughly in earnest. The Whigs had no doubt or mistrust of the course upon which they had entered. The reforms which they pursued were good and useful ones, and such, moreover, as an aristocratic party could promote without, as it appeared, any danger to themselves. The Tories, on the other hand, heartily believed in the sanctity of their own citadel, and in the "myriad woes" which would ensue upon the removal of a single stone. They had confidence, moreover, in their own strength. They did not, up to the last moment, despair of a successful re-

sistance. In their camp, then, there was neither doubt, lukewarmness, nor despondency. Thus, on both sides the struggle was conducted with an energy, a sincerity, and a hopefulness, which has never since that time characterised our party warfare. Had government been made for party, instead of party for government, then these would have been the palmy days of British politics.

With the death of George IV., the old tradition of prerogative, which his father had resuscitated, went to sleep once more, and the idea which had been grafted on to Toryism at the French Revolution now accordingly became its sole representative. For the adequate expression of this idea by itself, it was soon found that a new phase was required It is true enough that to the odious associations which still clung round the word Tory in the popular mind, Sir Robert Peel's adoption of the word Conservative is commonly and justly attributed. But when Toryism had ceased to be anything except Conservatism, it is obvious that sooner or later it would have come to be so called. In this epoch, then, the transformation of parties which had been gradually proceeding under cover of the old names for a quarter of a century was completed, and again we make a fresh start, dating formally from the first Reformed Parliament in the year 1833.

Exactly one generation has passed away since that time. But it cannot be said that the system of party has yet regained its old solidity. The English aristocracy, over confident in its own strength, had drawn their swords against each other, and fancied they could fight out the quarrel snugly among themselves, without, as a body, being the

weaker for it. Never was a greater mistake. When thieves fall out, thought the Radicals, honest men get their own. And the new class of members introduced by the Reform Bill very soon showed their determination not to be used as cat's-paws, or as mere *capite censi*, to give the Whig party a majority. Hence, during this fourth epoch of party, we have two principles of division to deal with, which are perpetually crossing each other. There is the Parliamentary division, and there is the social division; and even these are fluctuating. Sometimes the former presents us with two parties as before, and sometimes with three. Now we see Conservatives, Whigs, and Radicals standing out plainly and distinctly from each other; now the sharp outlines begin to grow confused, the colours to intermingle, and presently emerge from the cloud only two large parties, the Whigs and Radicals, united for the nonce against the Conservatives. For a third time they dissolve, and reconstruct themselves, and then we find Conservatives and Whigs combined in the same fashion against Radicals. Now, which of these divisions is essential, and which is only accidental? Are the Whigs the more sincere when they stand upon the side of Conservatives, or when they stand upon the side of the Radicals? Their quarrel with the former, it should be considered, is a dynastic quarrel, and is therefore in some respects likely to be more intense than any differences which separated them from the latter, being, as these must be, mere differences of opinion. It is probable that Lord Palmerston and Lord Derby may agree pretty much upon the mode in which this country should be governed; but

then both cannot govern it at once. It is probable—nay, certain, that Mr. Bright and Lord Palmerston differ considerably upon the first point; but then they are not rivals on the second. Thus it is that the present confused state of parties is still kept up, and that no immediate prospect of anything different is at hand. What that difference ought to be, were it possible, is the question at issue.

That many of the old Whigs regard the policy of the Radicals much as an old hen watches her brood of ducklings in the water is, we suppose, as true as the image we have used is trite. But is that a sufficient reason for the Whigs to unite with the Conservatives, and to abandon their old programme? Such a step would at once simplify the state of politics, and re-establish two great parties, as clear and well-defined as the old ones. Mr. May, whose Whiggism is undeniable, himself confesses that the Whig party have "nearly worked out the political reforms comprised in the scheme of an aristocratic party." If, therefore, the old function of the Whigs, as the opponents of prerogative, is, to say the least of it, dormant; while their new one as popular Reformers has been worked out; it would certainly seem as if nothing distinctive was left to them, and that they and the Conservatives have, by different roads, at length reached the same goal. If that is so, the Whigs are a sheer anachronism; and the sooner they do unite with the party which is now in opposition the better for Parliamentary Government, and the better for the whole nation, which can derive no real benefit from the perpetuation of a mere sham. From this point of view they

remind us, rather, of Temple Bar, which once a real protection to the liberties of the citizens, has now become only an intolerable obstruction to traffic. It is venerable, but it is a nuisance.

We have now traced the history of English parties from their origin to the present day. We have seen them pass through three distinct phases, and into the middle of a fourth. During the first, the main point at issue was the comparative danger of a disputed succession on the one hand, and of a Popish prince upon the other. During the second, the Tories were engaged in recovering for the Crown as much of its old prerogative as the Revolution had left untouched; and the Whigs in resisting a reaction which they believed to be contrary to the spirit, if not to the letter of the Constitution. During the third, the antagonism of the two parties, while it still frequently broke out on the Royal prerogative, had extended itself likewise to the subject of national institutions. During the fourth, we find that, prerogative having dropped out of the quarrel, institutions have become the sole battle-ground of parties, and that consequently modern Toryism is simply and exclusively conservative. What the popular party has become it is not so easy to define, since the traditions and necessities of one half of it are more or less at variance with its social sympathies and interests. Which of these two motives will ultimately determine the conduct of the Whig party is probably the most interesting subject of speculation which the present state of politics presents. On this, however, we cannot now enter. It remains to say a few words on the merits of party in the abstract, and to con-

sider upon what ground the acknowledgments of its usefulness are based, which we have placed at the commencement of this article.

Perhaps one of the best ways of appreciating the utility of party is by considering what Parliament must necessarily become without it. Let us imagine a House of Commons in which this system was unknown; in which members had no other object in attending in their places but the 'public good,' or every now and then the promotion or repulsion of some particular measure in which they took a personal interest. Let us suppose that the House, as a body, had no common principles of action, and that each man did what seemed right in his own eyes, regardless of the opinions of his neighbour: The ordinary business of the House would then virtually be transacted by a series of Select Committees, as questions successively arose in which batches of members had a stake. Among these batches there would, by the terms of our hypothesis, be no co-operation: no agreement, that is, of one batch to help another in a matter of no interest to itself on condition of receiving the like assistance in return. And when extraordinary business, some great debate—say on foreign affairs, or national expenditure—drew together a fuller House, men unaccustomed to act in concert and to all those little sacrifices which such action entails, could seldom impart much practical weight to their opinions, or agree in sufficient numbers on any definite issue, to obtain a majority on division. The minister, on the other hand, we must remember, would always be at the head of a certain number of supporters on whose votes he could rely of course. The Members of his

own administration, together with their respective retainers, such as every man in office may gather round himself if he chooses, would always present a compact and unanimous array to the fluctuating mass of its opponents. A minister in such a position would resemble a general at the head of a small regular force in the presence of a host of savages; and considering his superior chances of being able to create divisions and distractions among his enemies, in a more advantageous one than his. On all ordinary questions he would beat the opposition in detail, section by section, clique by clique, each one standing alone on its own particular subject; while on greater questions he would, for the reasons we have just given, be able either to crush or dissolve almost any opposition that might be formed against him, barring some extraordinary crisis, or the commission of some political crime. A minister so placed might, it is obvious, continue to maintain himself in power long after he had ceased to be acceptable to either Parliament or the people. And it is probable, indeed, that such a state of things must lead to the foundation of "party," even if unheard of previously.

By the system of party, then, minorities can make themselves heard much better than they could without it, while the public has a much surer guarantee for the expulsion of unpopular ministers. In the second place, it is to be observed that to the stringency of party discipline and the cogency of party interests, we owe the passage of more than one great measure, which without these twin propellers would, to say the least of it, have been indefinitely deferred. It is questionable, for instance, whether the whole rank and file of

the Whig party were in their inmost hearts in favour of Parliamentary Reform. But the leaders had made it a party question, and the followers were obliged to vote for it. Again, their chance of office depended on it, and this consideration would, of course, weigh the heaviest with the very men who prized their vested interests the most. It is equally doubtful whether the great Whig landowners were more favourable in their hearts to the cause of free trade than the Conservatives. But the spell of party discipline was on them, and they went up to battle with a smile.

The influence of party on individuals is far oftener beneficial than otherwise. There are a great many men who are crotchety, but only a very few to whom it does not do a great deal of good to have their sharp points, we will not say extracted, but hammered down. Nine characters out of ten are strengthened, and, as it were, condensed by the process. When party discipline is at its height, such men as these are caught up and clapped into the team alongside of steady-going veterans, of whom they learn to go straight, while teaching them in turn to go fast. In this way they are utilized, and the really serviceable stuff that is in them made the most of. A party is stronger and better for having a certain portion of such rough and jagged material welded into it, as the strongest gun-barrels are made out of old nails; while the individual himself is at the same time equally improved. In the second place, as every political party is a little state within itself, the laws by which it is governed exercise all those qualities which are peculiarly characteristic of Englishmen—toleration of adverse opinions, the sacrifice of personal feelings to the public good, a

regard to what is practical and possible, and the patient pursuit of great ends by slow and lawful means. An individual on whom any great issue hangs, may die to-morrow, and what he is to do, therefore must be done quickly. But party never dies, and one generation of men may contentedly hand down their inchoate policy to another in the calm confidence that if right it will be finished. This particular result, indeed, we hold to be one of the most valuable of which party is productive. But the habit of voluntary subordination which it necessarily encourages is likewise most fruitful of good, exhibited as it is in large classes of men who are as it were set upon a hill, the objects of universal contemplation. Unconditional obedience to party dictates is not of course to be admired; that, as Burke says, is a servitude to which no man could submit. But to what extent, and under what circumstances individuals may deviate from their connexion is still an unsettled question in party morality. In the days on which many men look back as furnishing a model of party management, namely, the ministry of the late Sir Robert Peel, this license was most sparingly conceded. And once, when some unlucky Conservative had actually been audacious enough to vote against his own side, men went about with grave faces, whispering quite seriously to each other that "there *had* been madness in the family."*

The drawbacks which attach to party are proper to it rather than essential. But they are certainly not inconsiderable. The heaviest of all arises from the necessity of

* This is a fact.

holding it together whether any great principle be on its trial before Parliament or not. A party, like any other body of men which depends for its efficiency on disciplines if allowed to straggle and disperse, cannot be summoned together again at a moment's notice in a state at all fit for action. Hence the origin of practices which, more than any other, bring party into disrepute, and teach the world to call it faction. We mean the employment of artificial "cries" to stimulate party zeal, and as pretexts for organised hostilities. The House of Commons, said a great writer, "grows fond of those who show it game." And a party must hunt something, though it is only "a drag," if it is to be kept loyal to its leaders, fit for work, and assured of its internal concord. The result is, that debates are frequently got up, and pushed to very close divisions, and even ministries sometimes overthrown, upon questions where the mere difference of opinion is far from justifying such extremities. A curious illustration of this occurred in 1857, when Government was beaten on the question of the Chinese War. We do not mean to say that the policy of Government in this case was not a legitimate subject of dispute, nor to deny that any members who voted with the Opposition were sincere in their disapproval of it, even to the length of ousting Lord Palmerston from office. But we do know this, that it was not the intention of the Conservative leaders to defeat the Government on that occasion; their object being merely to divide against it as large a minority as possible, for the purpose of animating their own party by revealing the weakness of their antagonists. A leading member of the Opposition, as the House was

just about dividing, was overheard to mutter to a colleague, "D——n! we shall be in a majority!" To the public in general, such a spirit must seem the acme of vexatiousness. Yet any one who will take the trouble honestly to think out the question for himself, will see that it must be next to impossible for party leaders to avoid such tactics. It is difficult to understand how Parliamentary Government, as practically worked in England at the present day, could exist without party. Party cannot exist unless its energies are periodically whetted. Real objects of contention do not always present themselves; and hence the growth of what it is usual to call "factious opposition" on both sides. It is an admitted evil. But any remedy for it that we are capable of discerning would be worse than the disease.

It is another unfortunate circumstance that party is more constantly seen under its lower than its higher aspect. As one by one the great questions which have hitherto divided parties disappear from view, the chances of a regular battle in which the combatants are heartily in earnest, and think more of the result than of themselves, grow less and less: and the spectacle of a sham fight waged only for the sake of discipline, more and more frequent. By this last consideration, indeed, another one is suggested of paramount importance to the state. What is to be the future of "party?" How will it be fed in coming times? Its artificial action is tolerated at the present day because many real and deeply set differences of opinion do still exist, which may at any time demand its services. But supposing all or almost all these to be eliminated; suppose the utmost to happen that could happen in the way of liberative legis-

lation; supposing no class in the community to have any grievance or shadow of a grievance left which Parliament could redress—and such a supposition is not really very extravagant—where would parties be then? Would they perish of sheer atrophy, or derive a precarious subsistence from foreign affairs? History affords us little or no help towards answering this question. The parties of Rome and Athens were so different from our own that we can hardly compare the two together. But this much is to be observed of the Athenians, that the meddlesome spirit of that people in foreign countries developed itself almost exactly in the same proportion as disputes upon domestic politics grew less and less possible by the gradual concession of every popular demand. It is certainly not to be desired that the English should follow this example. But through what stages Parliamentary Government has yet to pass, either before or after it shall arrive at such a point as this, no human foresight can divine. Deeper and more convulsing questions than any we have yet presumed may possibly arise hereafter to continue the vitality of parties to remote generations. But unless they do, it is not easy to conceive how their present organism can be perpetuated.

THE END.

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